FINAL REPORT
Electoral Representation Review
for the
Greater Dandenong City Council

26 May 2008
Table of Contents

1 Recommendation 2

2 Background 2

2.1 Legislative basis........................................................................................................2
2.2 The VEC and electoral representation reviews.....................................................2
2.3 Municipality profile..................................................................................................3
2.4 Current electoral structure ....................................................................................3

3 Electoral representation review process 4

4 Public involvement 5

4.1 Public information....................................................................................................5
4.2 Advertising................................................................................................................5
4.3 Media releases .........................................................................................................5
4.4 Information leaflet ..................................................................................................6
4.5 VEC website ...........................................................................................................6
4.6 Helpline ....................................................................................................................6
4.7 Guide for Submissions ............................................................................................6

5 Preliminary Report 6

5.1 Preliminary submissions ........................................................................................6
5.2 VEC research ..........................................................................................................9
5.3 Recommended options ..........................................................................................9

6 Response submissions 9

7 Public hearing 12

8 Findings and recommendation 14

8.1 Number of councillors ..........................................................................................14
8.2 Electoral structure ................................................................................................18
8.3 Recommendation ..................................................................................................25

9 Appendices 26

9.1 Public notices of the electoral representation review.........................................26
9.2 Media releases .......................................................................................................29
9.3 Information leaflet ...............................................................................................34
9.4 Guide for Submissions .........................................................................................35
9.5 List of people and groups making submissions ...................................................48
1 Recommendation

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) is required under the legislation for the electoral representation review to make a recommendation to the Minister for Local Government as to the number of councillors and the electoral structure that provides fair and equitable representation for the voters of the City of Greater Dandenong (s.219D Local Government Act 1989).

The VEC recommends that the Greater Dandenong City Council consist of eleven councillors to be elected from three three-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward.

This recommended structure is indicated in the map at the back of this Report. This structure is the same as the VEC’s preliminary preferred structure, although some ward names have changed and a slight boundary adjustment has been made around the Springvale Crematorium and Necropolis.

2 Background

2.1 Legislative basis

The Local Government (Democratic Reform) Act 2003, which amended the Local Government Act 1989 (the Act), was passed by the Parliament in Spring 2003. The amendments included provisions for independent electoral representation reviews of all Victorian councils. In accordance with this new legislation, the Greater Dandenong City Council received notice pursuant to s.219C of the Act from the Minister for Local Government that an electoral representation review was to be conducted for the City of Greater Dandenong. The notice appeared in the Victoria Government Gazette on 19 March 2007.

Under the legislation, a council is required to appoint an electoral commission to conduct an electoral representation review. The Greater Dandenong City Council appointed the VEC to conduct the review.

The purpose of an electoral representation review is to recommend an electoral structure that provides fair and equitable representation for the persons who are entitled to vote at a general election of the Council. Matters to be considered by the review are:

a) the number of councillors;

b) the electoral structure of the municipality (whether the municipality should be unsubdivided or divided into wards; and, if the municipality is to be subdivided, the number of wards and the number of councillors to be elected for each ward); and

c) if the recommendation is for the municipality to be divided into wards, boundaries for the wards that will:

i. provide for a fair and equitable division of the municipality; and

ii. ensure equality of representation, through the number of voters represented by each councillor being within 10% of the average number of voters represented by all councillors.

2.2 The VEC and electoral representation reviews

The VEC has ten years’ experience in working on municipal ward boundaries, being contracted by councils to prepare options for their consideration. VEC staff have also
worked for the Electoral Boundaries Commission in State redivisions. In doing this work, the VEC has used sophisticated mapping software, conducted field research and has developed expertise in preparing electoral boundaries that both comply with the approximate equality requirements of the legislation and respect communities of interest.

The VEC has engaged Mr Vern Robson to provide expertise in the field of local government. Mr Robson has worked in local government since 1955, and has been the Town Clerk and Chief Executive Officer of the City of Warrnambool, the Chief Commissioner of the City of Ballarat, the Administrator of the Mansfield Shire Council and the Director of the Local Government Branch of the former Department of Infrastructure.

2.3 Municipality profile

The City of Greater Dandenong was formed in 1994 when Dandenong, Noble Park and Springvale were joined as one municipality with the addition of Keysborough, Lyndhurst and Bangholme.

Greater Dandenong is located approximately 24 kilometres south-east of Melbourne and covers an area of 129 square kilometres. Major centres include Dandenong, Springvale and Noble Park.

The municipality has one of Melbourne’s largest industrial regions and its central activities district is Melbourne’s second largest retail and commercial centre. Businesses in the municipality are a key provider of employment in Melbourne’s south-east. Important industries in the municipality include metal, beverage, motor vehicle and malt manufacturing as well as food processing and distribution. The municipality has comparatively high proportions of labourers, technicians, tradespeople and machinery operators.

Greater Dandenong is one of the most ethnically diverse areas in Victoria and is home to residents from 156 different birthplaces. Over half of the municipality’s population were born overseas, the most common origins being Vietnam, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, India and China. After English, the most common languages spoken at home are Vietnamese, Khmer, Cantonese, Greek and Italian.

In addition, over 900 humanitarian immigrants settle in the municipality each year, coming from countries such as Sudan, Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, Egypt, Kenya, Ethiopia and Burma. This accounts for a quarter of metropolitan Melbourne’s annual total humanitarian immigrant intake. The municipality has a greater proportion of people identifying themselves as being of Buddhist, Islam and Eastern Orthodox faiths than Victoria as a whole.

(Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 Census; Social Conditions in Greater Dandenong (available from the City of Greater Dandenong Council website); Victorian Local Governance Association social statistics (available from VLGA website))

2.4 Current electoral structure

The City of Greater Dandenong is a subdivided municipality with eleven councillors elected from eleven single-councillor wards.
3 Electoral representation review process

Section 219D of the Local Government Act 1989 specifies that the purpose of an electoral representation review is to achieve “fair and equitable representation for the persons who are entitled to vote at a general election of the Council.” To achieve this, the VEC proceeds on the basis of three main principles:

1: to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is within 10% of the average number of voters per councillor for that municipality

Populations are continually changing – they grow in some areas and decline in others. Over time, these changes can lead to some wards having larger or smaller numbers of voters. As part of an electoral representation review, the VEC needs to correct any imbalances that have come about. The VEC also tries to make sure that the boundaries it sets will continue to provide equitable representation until the next review is due in eight years, by taking account of likely future changes.

2: to take a consistent, State-wide approach to the total number of councillors

Regarding the number of councillors, the VEC has adopted as a guide the numbers of councillors in similar-sized municipalities of similar categories within Victoria. In addition, the VEC considers any special circumstances that warrant the municipality having more or fewer councillors than similar municipalities.

3: to ensure that communities of interest are as fairly represented as possible

Every municipality contains a number of communities of interest. The electoral structure should be designed to take these into account where practicable. This is important for assisting the elected councillors to be effective representatives of the people in their particular municipality.

The VEC bases its recommendations on a number of factors, including the following:

- internal research specifically relating to the municipality under review;
- the VEC’s experience from its work with other municipalities and in similar reviews for State elections;
- the VEC’s expertise in mapping, demography and local government; and
- careful consideration of all input from the public in both written and verbal submissions made during the course of the review.

Input from the public is an important part of the process, but it is not the only factor considered. The VEC seeks to ensure fair and equitable representation for all voters of the municipality. This means carefully considering all views expressed in submissions from the public, and also considering other factors, such as the best possible representation for the various communities of interest in the municipality under review.

In considering public submissions, the VEC values the local knowledge and local perspectives that are presented. The VEC believes it important to consider the issues and information presented in submissions, as well as the arguments for particular structural models. In reaching its recommendations, the VEC seeks to combine the information gathered through public submissions with its own research in order to achieve what it considers to be a fair and equitable result until the next review period. The VEC does not make its recommendations based on a “straw poll” of the number of submissions supporting a particular option.
Further details about issues considered by the VEC can be found in Sections 8.1 and 8.2 of this Report and in the Guide for Submissions (Appendix 9.4).

4 Public involvement

4.1 Public information

The VEC informed the community about the electoral representation review through:

- advertising in newspapers;
- conducting an information session in Springvale on 28 February 2008, to outline the review process and to respond to questions from members of the community;
- communicating with the City of Greater Dandenong community through the use of media releases and the VEC website;
- publishing an article in the February 2008 edition of the Council newsletter;
- developing an information leaflet to be distributed through customer service centres and local libraries;
- publishing all preliminary submissions on the VEC website;
- establishing a helpline for responding to community questions;
- distributing a Guide for Submissions;
- releasing a Preliminary Report on 7 April 2008 and making the Report available at the Greater Dandenong City Council offices, at the VEC office and on the VEC website;
- publishing all submissions in response to the Preliminary Report on the VEC website; and
- conducting a public hearing in Springvale on 8 May 2008.

4.2 Advertising

In accordance with s.219F(4) of the Act, the VEC published the following advertisements for the electoral representation review:

- a public notice of the review, detailing the process, appeared in The Journal, the Dandenong Leader and the Dandenong Star between 11 and 14 February 2008;
- a general advertisement covering several electoral representation reviews, including the Greater Dandenong City Council review, appeared in the Herald Sun and The Age on 29 January 2008; and
- a notice that the Preliminary Report had been released appeared in The Journal, the Dandenong Leader and the Dandenong Star between 7 and 10 April 2008.

See Appendix 9.1.

4.3 Media releases

Media releases designed to supplement the paid advertising were distributed to The Journal, the Dandenong Leader, the Dandenong Star and 3SER Radio. See Appendix 9.2.
4.4 Information leaflet

An information leaflet about the review was distributed through the City’s customer service centres and local libraries. See Appendix 9.3.

4.5 VEC website

The VEC used its website to deliver information and to provide transparency in the review process. All preliminary submissions and submissions in response to the Preliminary Report were posted on the website to facilitate public access to this information. The VEC website can be viewed at www.vec.vic.gov.au

4.6 Helpline

The VEC established a helpline to assist with public enquiries concerning the electoral representation review process.

4.7 Guide for Submissions


5 Preliminary Report

In accordance with s.219F(6) of the Act, the VEC produced a Preliminary Report containing its preferred and alternative options for the City of Greater Dandenong. In developing these options, the VEC considered preliminary submissions made by various people and groups, as well as various other relevant factors.

5.1 Preliminary submissions

The VEC received 14 preliminary submissions by the closing time (12 March 2008 – 5.00 pm). A variety of councillor numbers and structures was suggested:

- 1 supported an unsubdivided municipality returning seven councillors;
- 3 supported an unsubdivided municipality returning nine councillors;
- 1 supported an unsubdivided municipality returning eleven councillors;
- 1 supported eleven single-councillor wards (the present structure);
- 3 supported eleven councillors elected from multi-councillor wards of various configurations;
- 2 supported eleven or twelve councillors elected from multi-councillor wards;
- 2 supported twelve councillors elected from multi-councillor wards; and
- 1 did not specify a preference for councillor numbers or structure.

Regarding the number of councillors, the majority of submissions contended that the City of Greater Dandenong should retain its current number of eleven councillors or move up to twelve councillors. Those supporting eleven councillors reported that the current number is satisfactory, that projected population growth can be reasonably accommodated, and that an uneven number of councillors reduces the potential for tied votes within the Council.

Some submitters argued that residents in the City of Greater Dandenong have numerous requirements from the Council, so more councillors are needed compared to other similar-sized municipalities. Such requirements were identified as being due to
the municipality’s high ethnic diversity, an ageing population and a high proportion of low income earners.

It was also mentioned that having eleven councillors diminishes the chance that small, local issues will be overlooked and provides a greater opportunity for all communities of interest and groups with specific issues to be more adequately represented.

One submitter supporting either eleven or twelve councillors was of the view that the mayoral casting vote should not be a consideration in determining the number of councillors. All submissions supporting twelve councillors said that eleven councillors would also be acceptable.

Four submissions advocated reducing the number of councillors. One submitter wrote that seven councillors was appropriate as fewer councillors would result in reduced rates in a city where many residents have below average incomes. The submitter also commented that as council employees research issues and brief councillors on particular matters, seven councillors should be able to make competent decisions based on the professional advice provided.

The submitters recommending nine councillors did so on the basis that some other municipalities with nine councillors (such as the Shire of Wellington and Mildura Rural City) are geographically considerably larger than Greater Dandenong and have higher populations. One submitter also mentioned a reduction in rates as a reason for having fewer councillors.

Regarding the electoral structure of the municipality, there was support for a single-councillor ward structure, multi-councillor wards and an unsubdivided municipality. The Greater Dandenong City Council submitted in favour of retaining an electoral structure with single-councillor wards, contending that the current structure has provided an effective framework for good governance and representation, and that it continues to meet community needs. The Council reported that a survey conducted by a consulting firm in 2007 for the then Department for Victorian Communities indicated that over 80% of surveyed residents were happy with the Council’s performance and representation.

Various arguments were presented in support of multi-councillor wards. Benefits of such a structure mentioned in submissions included:

- the likelihood of councillors with more diverse views being elected and the potential for the introduction of fresh ideas;
- the potential for workload sharing and benefits gained from teamwork;
- voters would be provided with a greater choice of candidates at election time and uncontested elections are less likely to occur;
- multi-councillor wards can better accommodate the forecast population changes during the next eight years;
- it is less likely that one political group will dominate the Council;
- communities of interest are less likely to be split by ward boundaries (as is currently the case);
- large multi-councillor wards work well in the City of Casey which faces similar issues to Greater Dandenong;
- the City has complex needs which are better met by the introduction of multi-councillor wards;
- councillors in single-councillor wards might ignore certain municipality-wide issues if they do not directly affect their wards;
- residents have a choice of councillors to approach with issues of concern;
- the use of “dummy candidates” is likely to be reduced (which was pointed out as previously being a problem in Greater Dandenong);
- multi-councillor wards accommodate geographic communities of interest as well as non-geographic communities of interest; and
- unfilled vacancies can be a problem in some single-councillor wards, as are ineffective and single-issue candidates.

A number of submitters also supported an unsubdivided municipality – arguments for this structure included that:

- such a structure would allow for better service delivery and decision making;
- councillors would be more responsive as they should take an interest in all issues affecting the municipality (rather than only those issues within their ward);
- candidates would be encouraged to “go out of their comfort zone” and promote themselves to the whole municipality at election time;
- it is too easy to become a councillor in the current system – an unsubdivided structure should present more competition for positions and hopefully lift the calibre of councillors;
- councillors would work together more effectively as they would have the common goal of the betterment of the City as a whole;
- the ward system creates divisions which may alienate and stigmatise ratepayers;
- councillors ought to be able to prioritise and organise workloads in an unsubdivided municipality (thus avoiding confusion and duplication);
- residents would have a greater choice of councillors to approach (which is particularly useful for migrants);
- a diversity of opinions may be more effectively represented on the Council, which is important in such a multicultural municipality as Greater Dandenong;
- the City is compact enough that small communities would not be left unrepresented;
- “special circumstances” are present which justify the abolition of ward boundaries, even though no other metropolitan municipality is unsubdivided;
- such an arrangement would increase the number of effective votes - currently a councillor can be elected from a very low level of primary votes, with the assistance of “dummy candidates”;
- few councillors have demonstrated an ability to look beyond ward issues to policies which have a municipality-wide impact – an unsubdivided municipality should discourage parochialism and promote a broader approach; and
- an unsubdivided structure would be preferable to multi-councillor wards as past municipality tensions may be reignited (if ward boundaries reflect
previous municipality boundaries) and councillors may be still too absorbed in ward issues.

A number of issues raised in submissions were beyond the scope of this review, including the application of postal voting, the tenure of councillors and preferential voting arrangements.

Appendix 9.5 contains details of those people and groups making preliminary submissions. Copies of the submissions can be downloaded from the VEC website, www.vec.vic.gov.au

5.2 VEC research

In addition to information provided in submissions, the VEC conducted its own research. This included research into the demographics of the municipality, using a number of sources including the 2001 and 2006 Census data. The VEC also took into account changes predicted by the Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Department of Infrastructure. Summaries of some of this research were published in the Guide for Submissions, the Preliminary Report and in Section 2.3 of this Report.

Development projections based on information presented by the Council were also taken into consideration. Fieldwork was conducted throughout the municipality by the VEC.

5.3 Recommended options

Having considered the issues outlined in the preliminary submissions and all other relevant factors, the VEC proposed four preliminary options for public comment.

The preferred option was:

➢ that the Greater Dandenong City Council consist of eleven councillors, to be elected from three three-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward.

The first alternative option was:

➢ that the Greater Dandenong City Council consist of eleven councillors, to be elected from four two-councillor wards and one three-councillor ward.

The second alternative option was:

➢ that the Greater Dandenong City Council consist of nine councillors, to be elected from three three-councillor wards.

The third alternative option was:

➢ that the Greater Dandenong City Council consist of nine councillors, to be elected from three three-councillor wards, but with boundaries different to the second alternative.

6 Response submissions

In accordance with s.219F(7) of the Act, the VEC invited written submissions in response to the Preliminary Report. The VEC received 19 response submissions by the closing time (1 May 2008 – 5.00 pm). Of these:

➢ 8 supported the preferred option of eleven councillors elected from four wards;
➢ 5 supported the first alternative option of eleven councillors elected from five wards;
- 3 supported the second alternative option of nine councillors elected from three wards;
- 2 supported either the second or the third alternative options; and
- 1 did not support any of the options, instead maintaining support for an unsubdivided municipality.

All options presented by the VEC contained multi-councillor wards, and submitters supportive of a range of options variously commented on the general advantages of multi-councillor wards. It was argued that such wards would:
- give voters more candidates to choose from;
- assist representation of non-geographic communities of interest;
- allow for collaboration between councillors and limit “budgetary competitiveness”;
- encourage councillors to become more approachable;
- be more likely than single-councillor wards to stay within the legislative tolerance for voter number deviation; and
- enable a greater diversity of councillors to be elected.

Those submitters specifically supportive of the preferred option argued that it agreeably retains eleven councillors. Submitters commented that the preferred option had advantages over the first alternative option as suburbs with characteristics in common were broadly kept together, such as Springvale and Springvale South, Noble Park and Keysborough, and Dandenong. It was commented that Noble Park and Noble Park North are together in the first alternative option, when these areas actually have little in common.

Some submitters pointed out that the preferred option was advantageous because more voters would have more councillors to represent them, which would also mean that a greater diversity of councillors would be likely to be elected. In contrast, the number of two-councillor wards in the first alternative option could lead to less diversity and limited representation of non-geographic communities of interest.

It was argued that proportional representation is “diluted” in the first alternative option, and the “stalemate” two-councillor wards could be problematic. The three-councillor wards in the preferred option were therefore considered advantageous.

Clearly defined ward boundaries were also mentioned as an advantage of the preferred option, and it was noted that in the first alternative option Noble Park North would be problematically divided and the use of Bakers Road as a boundary would be confusing, leaving those between Bakers Road and the EastLink freeway in a “no man’s land” situation.

It was argued that in the second and third alternative options (both returning nine councillors from three wards) it would be difficult for councillors to fully canvass those wards and keep in contact with the larger number of voters they would represent. It was suggested that it would be expensive for non-politically aligned candidates to run in the geographically larger wards.

Support was also presented for the first alternative option. It was argued that the model would be the least confusing for residents, and best meets the criteria of accommodating communities of interest and providing optimal councillor candidature. One submitter contended that the model provides a good balance between councillors understanding broader community needs as well as local community interests, and that this balance would be better achieved in the first alternative option than in the preferred option.
Some submitters were of the view that most of the wards in the first alternative option contained communities of interest well; it was commented that the “Murnong” Ward, covering Springvale and Springvale South, represents a strong community of interest. One submitter said that an exception to this was the “Karawun” Ward incorporating the eastern half of the municipality (with EastLink as a ward boundary) from Dandenong down to Lyndhurst. The submitter identified the community in this proposed ward as being very diverse, but commented that it was preferable to the “Red Gum” Ward in the preferred structure, which in the submitter’s view would be too big and contain a mixture of rural, dense residential and industrial land.

Some submitters suggested that a boundary in the first alternative option be altered so that EastLink be used rather than Bakers Road, which was viewed as a less identifiable and practical ward boundary than the major freeway.

A number of submitters commented on the advantages of maintaining eleven councillors. It was stated that eleven councillors are necessary to manage the increasing population in Greater Dandenong, and would provide more opportunity for community input and sharing of representational duties. It was also emphasised that although Greater Dandenong has a similar number of voters to other metropolitan councils with nine councillors, high levels of disadvantage are present in the municipality, which is a special circumstance that ought to be taken into account as it was in the VEC’s reviews of the Cities of Yarra and Moreland. It was also stated that eleven councillors would allow for a greater diversity of councillors to be elected, to more adequately represent the different groups within the municipality.

Numerous arguments were also presented in support of the nine-councillor options presented as the second and third alternative options in the Preliminary Report. Arguments common to both options included that:

- the nine-councillor models are the most fair because all voters will have the same number of representatives;
- boundary adjustments prior to the next scheduled review in 2015-2016 are unlikely to be required;
- the eleven-councillor models could give rise to unfair irregularities in the number of votes gained by successful candidates;
- in the two-councillor ward(s) in the eleven-councillor options, one ward councillor can be elected with a much lower number of votes than the other and councillor diversity may therefore be limited;
- Greater Dandenong’s population is too small to warrant eleven councillors when compared to other municipalities such as the Cities of Darebin, Kingston, Frankston and Knox, which are all culturally diverse and/or large in geographic area;
- while the City of Moreland may have special circumstances requiring eleven councillors, it has 18,000 more voters than Greater Dandenong – even with nine councillors, Greater Dandenong would have a lower voter-to-councillor ratio than either Darebin or Kingston;
- the Cities of Monash and Casey both have eleven councillors, yet have 23.4% and 38.1% more voters respectively than Greater Dandenong; and
- the money saved by only having nine councillors could be more usefully used in other practical areas – there are no advantages to be gained by having eleven councillors.
Writing in specific support of the second alternative option, submitters mentioned that it is preferable because it uses EastLink as a clear and identifiable boundary. The third alternative option was deemed problematic because of a ward boundary cutting close to central Dandenong.

One submitter maintained support for an unsubdivided municipality, arguing that councillors should represent the whole municipality rather than only ward interests. It was argued that the reasons presented against an unsubdivided structure in the Preliminary Report were insufficient compared to the important issue of long-term good governance. It was also argued that Greater Dandenong should not be divided into wards just because all other metropolitan municipalities are subdivided – each municipality should instead be assessed on its own merits. The submitter contended that a smaller number of more focussed and capable councillors should adequately be able to manage the workload.

A variety of comments were made regarding ward names. Some submitters argued that compass directions should be used, some argued for locality names, and others made comments on the Indigenous names and names of local trees that the VEC had used in the options in the Preliminary Report. While some submitters commented that locality names would be confusing, others said that Indigenous names and tree names would mean little to voters, and would be difficult for new arrivals to remember and pronounce. There was a more general preference for compass names to be considered.

A list of those people and groups who made response submissions is provided in Appendix 9.5. Copies of the submissions can be downloaded from the VEC website, www.vec.vic.gov.au

7 Public hearing

A public hearing was held in Springvale on 8 May 2008 at 6.30 pm. All people and groups who had made submissions in response to the VEC’s Preliminary Report were invited to speak to their submissions, and eight chose to do so. Members of the public were invited to attend, and there was a total audience of 22 people (including those making presentations). Speakers raised a number of issues in addition to points noted in written submissions. Some topics outside the scope of the review were also mentioned by some submitters.

Some submitters supporting the preliminary preferred option reported that the municipality’s diversity would be more adequately represented under such a structure, and that minority groups would have a better chance of gaining election and making important contributions to the Council. It was mentioned that proportional representation, as applies in multi-councillor wards, will afford a more democratic outcome for voters. One submitter said that the boundaries in the preferred option were clear and easy to identify, and that it was appropriate for Noble Park and Noble Park North to be contained in separate wards.

The Bakers Road ward boundary was identified as a problem in the first alternative option, due to the creation of a “no man’s land”. The number of two-councillor wards was also deemed problematic due to the potential for voting “stalemates”. Some of the population deviations in the first alternative option were also questioned, as it was viewed that “Garrong” Ward might have too many voters and “Wangnarra” Ward too few voters to be sustainable.

Some other submitters however preferred the first alternative option to the preferred option. It was contended that this model in fact had clearer and more identifiable boundaries due to the use of arterial roads and the EastLink freeway. It was suggested
that alterations could be made to the VEC’s model so that EastLink would become the boundary between the “Garrong” and “Wangnarra” wards rather than Bakers Road.

On the question of councillor numbers, some submitters supportive of eleven councillors said that the multicultural nature of the municipality, the high degree of complex social needs, the number of people in rental accommodation and the ageing population created a heavier workload for councillors. Councillors who spoke at the hearing reported being contacted by voters on a range of issues, from assistance with English and other communication difficulties to constituents seeking assistance with the completion of documentation for welfare or rental payments. It was asserted that with eleven councillors, there was less chance that small, local issues would be overlooked, and that eleven councillors would encourage collective and collaborative decision making. The municipality’s growing population, particularly the number of new citizen arrivals to Australia, were also reasons cited for the municipality requiring eleven councillors.

The Council submitted that even though many issues in the municipality are dealt with through council administration rather than through councillors themselves, there was still an expectation that councillors needed to be “out and about” and actively involved in the community. It was suggested that eleven councillors would be more appropriate to represent the diverse population of the municipality.

A different submitter argued that it would be more expensive for candidates to contest election in either of the nine-councillor models, due to the large size of the wards, and this might discourage some appropriate people from nominating as council candidates.

Others speaking at the hearing supported the nine-councillor options, presented as the second and third alternative options in the Preliminary Report. A number of comments were made to the effect that three three-councillor wards would be fairer because all voters would have the same number of representatives, which is a more simple and straightforward structure for voters to understand.

It was contended that due to new communication technologies, nine councillors are sufficient for Greater Dandenong, as voters no longer need to be able to contact councillors in person. It was suggested that nine councillors would provide enough choice for voters in the municipality, and would also be sufficient to deal with complex issues and provide local representation. It was mentioned that there are a range of support groups and community organisations in the municipality, as well as the administration branch of the Council, who are meeting the different needs of the municipality, thus eleven councillors is not necessary.

Another submitter argued that nine councillors are adequate to make decisions, particularly given that council staff provide support by way of research and information briefings to councillors. Cost savings were also noted as a benefit of reducing the number of councillors. Regarding the population growth expected in the municipality, one submitter said that the growth was only projected, and that eleven councillors could be recommended at the next scheduled review in 2015-2016 if the growth did in fact eventuate.

In regard to the particular nine-councillor models, one submitter said that the second alternative option was preferable as the deviations should stay within the required range for a longer period of time, and that a ward boundary would cut too close to Dandenong in the third alternative option. It was also submitted that EastLink was a strong ward boundary in the second alternative option, and that separating Springvale and Springvale South would not be detrimental to communities of interest.
One submitter speaking at the public hearing maintained the view that the municipality should be unsubdivided. It was stated that councillors should look beyond ward boundaries to represent the whole City, and that wards are a divisive barrier to good governance. The submitter argued that the VEC’s reasons for not recommending an unsubdivided structure were insufficient, and that each municipality should be considered on its own merits as a unique case rather than compared to other municipalities. Another submitter agreed that the potential for a large number of candidates on the ballot paper should not be the only basis that an unsubdivided structure cannot be recommended.

A variety of comments were made regarding ward names. Two submitters said that compass points or tree names should be used rather than locality names; another said that compass points would be the easiest for voters to understand; while another submitter said that locality names should be used as they would have the greatest understanding in the municipality.

8 Findings and recommendation

The Act states that the purpose of the electoral representation review is to consider two matters. The first matter is the number of councillors for the municipality and the second matter is the electoral structure of the municipality.

In conducting electoral representation reviews, the VEC follows an extensive process of consideration as required by legislation. At the preliminary stage, the VEC considers preliminary submissions along with a wide variety of other information in order to develop a preferred and (in most circumstances) one or more alternative electoral structure options for the municipality in question. The VEC then makes the options available in its Preliminary Report, to be assessed by the public in response submissions and at the public hearing. Having considered the feedback, the VEC then makes a recommendation.

8.1 Number of councillors

Issues considered by the VEC

The legislation provides that a council must consist of between 5 and 12 councillors (s.5B(1)). It does not, however, prescribe the matters to be considered by the reviewer in recommending the number of councillors for a municipality.

The VEC has therefore been required to identify the appropriate matters to take into account when considering the number of councillors.

In terms of voter numbers, Victorian municipalities vary from approximately 4,000 to nearly 160,000. The VEC applies the legislative provisions relating to numbers of councillors in a logical way, with those councils that have the largest number of voters having the most councillors, and those councils that have the least number of voters having the fewest councillors.

In most cases, the electoral structure and the number of councillors were established by the Commissioners when local government was restructured between 1993 and 1995. Commissioners did not have the benefit of a State-wide reference when considering the appropriate number of councillors for their respective municipalities. The result was a degree of disparity in councillor numbers for similar types of municipalities. The VEC has produced a table that lists each municipality and the number of councillors. The table differentiates between rural, regional and
metropolitan councils in recognition of the different circumstances and needs between these categories of councils. The table has been a valuable reference point in considering the appropriate number of councillors and was made available to the public in the Guide for Submissions. The information has enabled the VEC to compare a council being reviewed to councils with similar voter numbers and areas.

The VEC also considers whether the number of voters in the municipality is anticipated to increase or decline in the period between reviews (approximately eight years). Population forecasts produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment have been used to assist the VEC in making its assessment.

In addition, the VEC considers any special issues or circumstances that may require a council to have more or fewer councillors than would otherwise be the case. Public submissions provide valuable information regarding any such issues or circumstances.

The VEC's findings

The VEC's preliminary options

In its Preliminary Report, the VEC found eleven to be the most appropriate number of councillors for the Greater Dandenong City Council, and so presented two eleven-councillor structures as the preliminary preferred and first alternative structures. The VEC also recognised arguments put forward for nine councillors, and so included two nine-councillor structures as the second and third alternative options for public comment.

Various arguments were presented in preliminary submissions for decreasing the number of councillors to nine, including the view that rates in the City would be reduced if there were fewer councillors. The VEC noted that its objective however is to recommend a structure which will provide the best opportunity for fair and equitable representation for voters. One submitter suggested that seven councillors would be appropriate; the VEC considered that this number of councillors would be too few in comparison with municipalities with similarly large numbers of voters.

Some submitters compared Greater Dandenong with other municipalities, with one submitter commenting that some other municipalities have only nine councillors but a greater number of voters than Greater Dandenong. When making a recommendation on councillor numbers, the VEC certainly does consider the municipality under review relative to other municipalities of similar size and nature. With 93,109 voters (and a population of 125,520), Greater Dandenong was viewed to generally fit within the nine-councillor band; it has a similar number of voters to the cities of Glen Eira and Darebin, both of which have nine councillors. Metropolitan municipalities with eleven councillors include the cities of Moreland, Brimbank and Monash – these municipalities all have more than 110,000 voters and populations greater than 135,000.

The VEC does, however, take note of any special circumstances which might warrant a municipality having more (or fewer) councillors than initial comparisons with other similar-sized municipalities might suggest. In the case of Greater Dandenong there are various demographic factors, highlighted in submissions, which the VEC considered to be important considerations. The City has a very high migrant population; over 50% of the population was born overseas, which is a higher proportion than any other municipality in Victoria. Greater Dandenong also has a
higher proportion of residents with low proficiency in English, and a higher proportion of people speaking a language other than English, than any other Victorian municipality.

Migrants in Greater Dandenong include skilled settlers as well as humanitarian refugees. In 2006-07, approximately 28% of humanitarian settlers arriving in Melbourne settled in Greater Dandenong, mostly originating from Afghanistan, Iran, Burma and Kenya. The City also has a high proportion of residents on lower than average incomes - of all the metropolitan municipalities, Greater Dandenong has the highest proportion of households in the lowest income quartile. The Council’s submission noted that unemployment in the area is considerably higher than the metropolitan average, and that 6% of residents have a severe or profound disability requiring them to obtain assistance with mobility, communication or self-care (the average for metropolitan Melbourne is 4%).

Submissions also pointed out that the municipality has an ageing population, and the population is still growing reasonably fast; it is expected to increase by 4.68% between 2008 and 2016. At 129 km², the municipality is the one of the largest metropolitan municipalities in terms of area, although smaller than those on the metropolitan/rural fringe.

The VEC considered all these to be quite exceptional circumstances, and recommended that the City of Greater Dandenong retain eleven councillors, in recognition of the level of complexity that these special circumstances may bring to the responsibilities of the Council. It was noted in the Preliminary Report that such a recommendation would be consistent with reviews of the Cities of Yarra and Moreland, where the VEC also determined that special circumstances warranted more councillors than more generalised observations based only on voter numbers would otherwise suggest.

Some submitters argued for twelve councillors, however the VEC viewed eleven to be a more appropriate number based on voter numbers as compared to other municipalities. The only municipality in Victoria to have twelve councillors is the City of Greater Geelong, which has nearly 160,000 voters. All submitters supporting twelve councillors indicated that eleven would also be satisfactory. In addition, the VEC generally prefers to recommend an uneven number of councillors, so as to reduce the potential for tied votes which are then determined by a mayoral casting vote.

Eleven was therefore the preferred number of councillors for the City of Greater Dandenong. However, due to the fact that Greater Dandenong has similar voter and population numbers to metropolitan municipalities with nine councillors, two nine-councillor models were also put forward for public comment, although they were the least-preferred options at the preliminary stage.

The options are tested

The Preliminary Report provided an opportunity for the public to comment on concrete options. The VEC received nineteen response submissions and heard eight speakers at the public hearing.

A variety of views were expressed as to whether the municipality should be represented by nine or eleven councillors, and the VEC carefully considered and weighed-up the various arguments. On the one hand, it was expressed that nine councillors are appropriate due to comparisons with other metropolitan municipalities
such as Darebin, Knox, Kingston and Frankston, all of which have nine councillors but have a larger voting population than Greater Dandenong. It was also suggested that there are numerous community organisations, advice bureaus and the Council’s administrative branch who can more effectively deal with the quite complex issues that arise in a municipality such as Greater Dandenong, rather than extra councillors, and that a three-three-councillor ward structure would be the most equitable and easily understood structure for voters. The potential for cost savings was also mentioned.

On the other hand, a number of submitters expressed the view that Greater Dandenong should retain eleven councillors because of the municipality’s exceptional circumstances. As previously mentioned, the VEC has in the past recommended a higher number of councillors based on the high levels of disadvantage which exist in some municipalities.

In the preliminary stage of the review, the VEC acknowledged that the City of Greater Dandenong does appear to fit more comfortably within the nine-councillor band when voter numbers are considered. With 93,109 voters, Greater Dandenong has more voters than the Cities of Yarra, Stonnington, Manningham and Frankston, but fewer voters than the Cities of Glen Eira, Darebin, Kingston and Knox, all of which have nine councillors. The metropolitan municipalities with eleven councillors – Moreland, Brimbank and Monash – have between 111,000 and 122,000 voters.

In all past reviews the VEC has given careful consideration to exceptional factors which may warrant a council having more or fewer councillors than would be suggested by voter numbers alone. As outlined above, submissions and research conducted by the VEC identified a range of factors which present the City of Greater Dandenong as one of Victoria’s most disadvantaged municipalities. Councillors at the public hearing reported that many requests for assistance that they constantly receive from voters stem from this disadvantage, such as residents requiring help and advice due to limited English skills or financial stress.

The VEC understands that there are numerous organisations that operate within the municipality to help residents who find themselves in difficult circumstances or have distinct needs, as well as the Council’s administrative branch, which may in fact be in a better position than individual councillors to provide particular types of assistance. However, the VEC is of the view that more rather than fewer councillors would be beneficial to assist these residents with special needs if they can, or refer these residents to appropriate services.

The VEC also notes the expected population growth in the municipality of 4.56% over the next eight years, which is higher than many other metropolitan municipalities. While this growth is only a projected figure, the Council reported at the public hearing that developments in Dandenong will be constructed relatively quickly, and that anticipated developments in Keysborough are expected to house 3,500 new residents. Some submitters also mentioned that a greater number of councillors may offer a diversity of “voice” at the Council table, and also provide the opportunity for voters to have continued direct access to councillors.

On the issue of councillor access, one submitter suggested that with the increasing use of technology, personal access to councillors is not as important as it may have been in the past, particularly for young people. The VEC notes however that Greater Dandenong has the lowest proportion of households with internet connection of any
metropolitan municipality, therefore personal communication is still likely to be quite important for many people, including those residents with limited English language skills.

The VEC also considered communities of interest, and whether these might be more effectively captured in a nine-councillor or an eleven-councillor structure. After careful consideration, the VEC viewed communities of interest to be better reflected in the preliminary preferred option than in the nine-councillor options. For example, in the second alternative option, Springvale is split from Springvale South, which several submitters identified as sharing common interests. In the third alternative option, a ward boundary cutting quite close to the Dandenong central business district was viewed as being problematic, as it would separate the centre of Dandenong from those voters who live in the surrounding areas and utilise Dandenong’s services. Further discussion of the different preliminary electoral structures is contained in section 8.2 below.

Arguments were presented to suggest that the nine-councillor structures would be fairer for all voters, as all voters would have the same number of representatives and all candidates would require the same quota of votes to be elected. However, the VEC believes that fair and equitable representation can be achieved in municipalities with wards of different sizes as the councillor-to-voter ratio is consistent throughout the municipality and similar numbers of votes are required to be elected.

Issues regarding councillor workload, costs associated with the number of councillors and the population density of the municipality were also raised as reasons for the suitability of eleven and nine councillors respectively. However, the VEC considers these factors less relevant to the overall task of determining what will provide fair and equitable representation for voters than the factors explained above. The VEC therefore confirms its view that eleven councillors are most likely to provide fair and equitable representation to the voters of the City of Greater Dandenong for the next eight years.

8.2 Electoral structure

Issues considered by the VEC

Provisions within the Act allow for a municipality to be unsubdivided, with all councillors elected “at large” by all voters, or for a municipality to be subdivided into a number of wards. If wards have only one councillor, councillors are elected using preferential voting. Under an unsubdivided or a multi-councillor ward structure, councillors are elected through proportional representation. With each system, voters mark their ballot papers the same way.

If the municipality is subdivided into wards, there are three options available:

- single-councillor wards;
- multi-councillor wards; and
- a combination of both single-councillor and multi-councillor wards.

Boundaries for wards must:

- provide for a fair and equitable division of the municipality; and
- ensure equality of representation, through the number of voters represented by each councillor being within 10% of the average number of voters per councillor for the municipality.
In addition to the legislative requirements, a number of other factors were considered when evaluating subdivided structures. These factors included:

- communities of interest (communities of interest are groups of people who share a range of common concerns – they may occur where people are linked with each other geographically, economically or through having particular needs);
- spreading developing areas over a number of wards;
- using logical boundaries such as main roads, physical features and existing boundaries for easy identification of wards; and
- taking account of likely population changes.

In developing ward boundaries, the VEC aims to achieve the best possible balance between these criteria.

The VEC’s findings

The initial stages of consideration resulted in a preferred and three alternative electoral structures, which were put to the public in the VEC’s Preliminary Report.

Communities of interest

The City of Greater Dandenong is amongst the fastest growing metropolitan municipalities, with its population expected to increase by 4.68% in the years from 2008 to 2016. This growth rate is, however, relatively small when compared to municipalities on the metropolitan/rural fringe and some regional areas.

The median age in the municipality is 36, similar to the Victorian median age of 37. The age breakdown in Greater Dandenong is also remarkably similar to Victorian averages, and the metropolitan municipality medians. The suburbs of Springvale and Dandenong have a high proportion of older citizens, with over 16% of the population aged over 65. The ageing population will likely result in a significantly higher proportion of older residents in the municipality in the near future.

There are approximately 45,000 households in the area, 33,000 of which are families. Of these families, 47.7% are couples with children, 29.6% are couples without children, and 20.4% are one-parent families. Couples with children are most prominent in Keysborough and Springvale South, whilst one-parent families are most common in Noble Park and Dandenong. Many families in the municipality with young children are headed by overseas-born parents.

Ethnic diversity is a distinguishing characteristic of the City of Greater Dandenong. Only 40.4% of the population was born in Australia, compared with 69.6% of Victorians generally. Of those not born in Australia, 8.4% were born in Vietnam, 3.7% in Cambodia, 3.1% in Sri Lanka, 3.0% in India and 2.1% in China. Springvale and Dandenong have the highest proportions of residents born overseas.

In the years 2002 to 2007, nearly 13,000 new arrivals to Victoria settled in the municipality. This accounts for nearly 9% of the total number of new settlers in metropolitan Melbourne. Humanitarian settlers have arrived mainly from Sudan, Afghanistan and the former Yugoslavia, while skilled settlers originate mostly from India, Sri Lanka, China and the Phillipines. Census data indicate that of overseas-born people who have arrived in the City since 2001, the greatest proportions have settled in Dandenong and Springvale North. In some areas of the municipality, such as parts of the suburbs of Springvale and Dandenong, up to 35% of the population is not fluent in English.
Incomes in Greater Dandenong are lower than in Victoria generally. The median weekly household income in Victoria is $1,022 while in Greater Dandenong it is $770. The suburbs of Dandenong North and Noble Park have significantly higher numbers of public housing tenants than the rest of the municipality. In contrast Lyndhurst and Bangholme have none. The most common industries of employment in Greater Dandenong are manufacturing and food services.

(Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 Census; Social Conditions in Greater Dandenong (available from the City of Greater Dandenong Council website); Victorian Local Governance Association social statistics (available from VLGA website))

Should the municipality be unsubdivided?

In the review’s preliminary stages, the VEC considered a number of options, including whether or not the municipality should be unsubdivided.

The VEC recognised that there are a number of distinct communities of interest within the municipality, particularly related to ethnicity. Land use was also found to differ considerably, extending from heavy residential and retail areas to industrial, recreational and even some farming areas in the south. It was therefore viewed that there are a number of communities within the municipality that have varying interests and different needs from the Council. The VEC considered that the opportunity for fair and equitable representation was most likely to be achieved by dividing the municipality into wards.

The VEC also noted that the City of Greater Dandenong contains over 93,000 voters. An unsubdivided municipality would be a very large electorate for candidates to canvass, and would be likely to result in an impractically large number of candidates to be listed on one ballot paper. At the 2005 and 2003 elections there were 46 and 52 candidates respectively standing across all wards. If all of those candidates were to stand for election in an unsubdivided municipality, all would appear on the one ballot paper and voters would have to number each box with a preference. This situation would be likely to be quite confusing for voters.

The VEC acknowledges the arguments presented in submissions for an unsubdivided structure, but believes that it is more appropriate that the City of Greater Dandenong be divided into wards, and that the recommended multi-councillor ward option may address many of the submitters’ expressed concerns. It is important to note that whatever electoral structure a municipality has, the Local Government Act requires councillors to act in the interests of the whole municipality, not just individual wards.

It is also important to note that ward councillors do not unilaterally decide on issues that affect their wards. Councils make policy decisions as a group. It is therefore important that the councillors who are elected can represent the perspectives of the different communities of interest within the municipality to the Council as a whole, so that the Council can understand and consider as many perspectives as possible. Where different areas have different needs from the Council, it is important for those areas to have a councillor or councillors who can best represent the needs and interests of the people of those areas.

A submitter speaking in support of an unsubdivided structure at the public hearing was concerned that wards are divisive and do not provide a structure for good governance. It can be argued that no electoral structure guarantees good governance and accountability to the community; the VEC therefore proceeds with the aim of
recommending a structure which in its estimation will best meet the representation needs of voters. The VEC does however believe that there are municipalities with multi-councillor ward structures operating currently in Victoria which provide good governance and accountability for voters.

**Single-councillor or multi-councillor wards?**

In deciding that the municipality should be subdivided, the VEC then considered the merits of single-councillor ward and multi-councillor ward structures. At the preliminary stage, the Council’s submission was the only one to argue for single-councillor wards, contending that this structure recognises distinct communities of interest and allows for more personal representation by elected councillors, amongst other considerations.

The VEC recognises that there are indeed distinct communities of interest which exist in Greater Dandenong, but does not believe they can be captured in a meaningful way by single-councillor wards. Thus a single-councillor ward model was not presented as an option in the Preliminary Report. The VEC is of the view that ward boundaries in such a structure would artificially split communities of interest, and that it would be unlikely for all wards to remain within the legislative voter number requirements until the next scheduled review in 2016. At the preliminary stage, the VEC therefore presented four variations of a multi-councillor ward structure for the City of Greater Dandenong for public comment.

A number of submitters wrote in support of multi-councillor wards, one argument being the desire to have a more diverse range of councillors. The VEC considers that representation of non-geographic communities of interest will be assisted by the introduction of multi-councillor wards and proportional representation. The basis of this system is that candidates are elected in proportion to the level of their electoral support. Under proportional representation any candidate who obtains a “quota”, either through first-preference votes or through the flow of preferences, is elected. This means candidates representing large minorities and candidates representing majorities will generally have a reasonable expectation of being elected.

The Council’s submission expressed concern that proportional representation may not be easily understood by all voters, but it is important to point out that ballot papers are marked in exactly the same way as ballot papers used for elections in single-councillor wards (it is only the method of vote counting which differs).

As noted in some submissions, voters are likely to have a greater choice of candidates to choose from in multi-councillor wards. At the 2005 election, there were uncontested elections in Dandenong North Ward and Keysborough Ward, and voters in Keysborough South Ward and Noble Park North Ward only had a choice of three candidates. Voters in multi-councillor wards will also have a range of councillors to approach, the benefits of which were identified by three submitters. One submission pointed out that migrants in particular might find contacting councillors easier if they have more than one to choose from, especially where language difficulties are being experienced.

Additionally, voter numbers in multi-councillor wards (as opposed to single-councillor wards) are more likely to stay within the legislative tolerance for a longer period of time. Greater Dandenong is a relatively fast-growing metropolitan municipality; one ward, Keysborough South, is currently well outside the deviation limit of ±10% (see section 3), at 22.37%, and if the current single-councillor ward structure were
retained it is predicted that four wards would exceed the tolerance by 2012. The multi-councillor wards in the options proposed by the VEC were all predicted to meet the Act’s requirements at least until after the 2012 elections.

In summary, as a result of arguments contained in submissions and the VEC’s own research, the VEC believes that a multi-councillor ward structure is appropriate for the City of Greater Dandenong. Such a structure can capture the geographic communities of interest within the municipality, and can also facilitate representation of non-geographic and more widespread communities of interest, including ethnic, cultural and socio-economic communities.

The VEC’s preliminary options

In its Preliminary Report, the VEC presented four options involving multi-councillor wards: two options with eleven councillors and two options with nine councillors. The preferred option divided the municipality into four wards and was considered to have a number of advantages particularly relating to communities of interest: Dandenong was contained in one ward, and Springvale and Springvale South were contained in one ward, which was highlighted by several submitters as important.

One submitter commented that residents of Noble Park and Keysborough have a lot in common, including use of the same shopping, transport and sporting facilities. This option included Noble Park and the more populated areas of Keysborough in one ward, thus containing this particular community of interest. Keysborough was split into two wards, however, to ensure that voter numbers are within the acceptable legislative tolerances, and will remain that way until 2012. The first preliminary alternative option, which is discussed below, differs in this respect.

It was considered that the preferred structure, with three councillors in three wards and two in the other, should give voters a greater choice of candidates at election time, and a range of councillors to approach with issues of concern. Due to the compact nature of the municipality, the VEC did not consider the wards to be too large in area for candidates to canvass voters for election purposes or for elected councillors to maintain contact with their constituents.

The VEC considered that its preferred option used boundaries that captured the communities of interest well and were likely to last until the next scheduled representation review, and had the appropriate number of councillors required for voters within the City of Greater Dandenong.

The first preliminary alternative option divided the municipality into five wards. The option differed from the preferred option in that Keysborough was contained in one ward, and Noble Park North and Noble Park were also contained in one ward. Like the preferred option, the uniting of Springvale and Springvale South appeared to capture cultural communities of interest in the area.

With five wards, however, the option obviously contained fewer councillors per ward than the preferred option. This was viewed as a potentially negative aspect for some submitters as it presented voters in most wards with fewer councillors to approach from their ward than the preferred option.

Fewer councillors per ward may also reduce the diversity of councillors, and limit the opportunity for representation of non-geographic communities of interest in comparison to the preferred option.
In terms of voter numbers, the preferred option was also viewed to be more likely to be more effective in containing growth in future voter numbers to within legislative limits. Three of the five wards in the first alternative option are likely to be very close to being outside the acceptable tolerance by 2012, if not over this level, due to the imprecise nature of future population estimates.

For these reasons, the VEC viewed that, on balance, the four-ward model returning eleven councillors was the better option at the preliminary stage of the review.

The VEC also presented two nine-councillor models in the Preliminary Report, and acknowledges the comments from submitters on these options. As both options contained three three-councillor wards, they presented the same opportunities in regards to candidate choice at election time, councillor diversity and the number of councillors constituents may approach within each ward. The clear difference was in the grouping of communities of interest.

The second alternative option used EastLink to divide the municipality into west and east. Dandenong, Dandenong South and most of Dandenong North were contained in the East Ward, although part of Dandenong North (west of EastLink) was excluded. While all of Keysborough was included in one ward, Springvale was split from Springvale South.

The third alternative option presented a “North West” Ward comprising Springvale, Springvale South and Noble Park; a “North East” Ward containing Dandenong North, Noble Park North and Dandenong; and a “South” Ward containing Dandenong South, Lyndhurst, Bangholme and Keysborough. This option was the VEC’s least preferred for two reasons; it had nine councillors, and also had a ward boundary which cut quite close to the Dandenong central business district. It was viewed that the structure may separate communities of voters who do not live in the centre of Dandenong but who utilise services located in this area. A more positive feature was that it contained Keysborough in one ward, and the communities of Springvale and Springvale South together.

The options are tested

As noted above, legislation provides that, in conducting an electoral representation review, the VEC must put forward its initial preferred option and any alternative options in a Preliminary Report. The VEC must also invite written submissions on the Report and it must hear verbal presentations if any person making a submission so requests. In effect, the Preliminary Report provides the VEC with an opportunity to test its preliminary options before formulating a final recommendation for the Minister to consider. Similarly, written and verbal responses to the Report operate either to affirm or deny the appropriateness of the electoral models suggested by the VEC.

The VEC received nineteen submissions in response to its Report and it heard eight presentations at the public hearing, as detailed in Sections 6 and 7. As explained in section 8.1, after much consideration, the VEC has decided to recommend eleven councillors for the City of Greater Dandenong, in recognition of the diverse nature of the population, the degree of disadvantage experienced in the population, and the fact that the VEC viewed the eleven-councillor models as better capturing communities of interest.

In arguing for nine councillors, some submitters believed that this option would be the most fair as all voters would have three councillors to represent them, and all
candidates would require a similar proportion of votes to be elected. The VEC notes that mathematically the quotas as percentages do vary in wards with different number of councillors, but the difference in the actual number of votes required to be elected is rarely significant. Variances in the number of votes required to be elected can also occur even when all wards have the same number of councillors, given the variation in voter numbers within the ±10% tolerance.

In deciding that it is appropriate for the City of Greater Dandenong to be represented by eleven councillors, the VEC then needed to determine which of its preliminary options would be most likely to encourage good outcomes in terms of representation for voters. The VEC confirms its view that the preliminary preferred option as presented in the Preliminary Report is the most suitable for the City of Greater Dandenong, for the following reasons.

The VEC views communities of interest to be well reflected in this structure; Springvale and Springvale South are contained in one ward; Noble Park and Keysborough are contained in another; and all of central Dandenong is together. On the other hand, in the first alternative option the ward boundary encroached further into Dandenong than in the preferred option, whilst Noble Park and Noble Park North were included in one ward; some submitters mentioned that these areas in practice have little in common.

Strong boundaries have generally been used in the preferred option, such as the Princes Highway and part of EastLink. A number of submitters supportive of the first alternative option were attracted to the use of EastLink as a ward boundary running north-south through the municipality, although commented that a small section of voters would be caught in a “no man’s land” in one ward between a ward boundary on Bakers Road and the EastLink freeway. The VEC attempted to shift this ward boundary, but found that further ward boundary adjustments around Dandenong were then necessary to meet voter number requirements. Such adjustments were viewed as problematic due to the potential for ward boundaries to cut too close to the central Dandenong business and education precincts.

Submitters also commented that the preferred option was advantageous because more voters would have more councillors to represent them, which would also mean that a greater diversity of councillors would be likely to be elected. In contrast, the number of two-councillor wards in the first alternative option could lead to less diversity and limited representation of non-geographic communities of interest. On balance therefore, the VEC views the preferred option as presented in the Preliminary Report to have substantial advantages over the first alternative option, and believes this multi-councillor ward structure will enhance representation opportunities for voters.

With respect to ward names, the VEC received useful feedback from submitters and speakers at the public hearing, and appreciates these contributions. Obviously, as a diversity of views were presented on some names, not all suggestions can be incorporated. The VEC agreed with some submitters that locality names may be confusing for voters, as might the Indigenous names presented in the Preliminary Report. Compass directions were also viewed to be difficult; although the recommended option is a four-ward structure, the wards do not fit easily into North, South, East and West categories. Ward names such as “North East”, “North West”, “South East” and “Central” were also viewed as potentially confusing. Names of native trees have therefore been used; it is hoped that these are reasonably distinct
and clear for voters to pronounce and identify. The VEC has used the following ward names:

- Lightwood Ward;
- Silverleaf Ward;
- Paperbark Ward; and
- Red Gum Ward.

In conclusion, the VEC considers that a structure with eleven councillors elected from four wards is most likely to provide the best balance between the criteria it considers for the electoral representation review. The VEC is satisfied that this structure will best provide fair and equitable electoral representation to voters within the City of Greater Dandenong.

### 8.3 Recommendation

Having taken into account all relevant factors, including the submissions and presentations at the public hearing, the VEC recommends that the City of Greater Dandenong consist of eleven councillors to be elected from three three-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward.

Steve Tully

Electoral Commissioner
9 Appendices

9.1 Public notices of the electoral representation review

Greater Dandenong City

The Greater Dandenong City Council has appointed the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to conduct an electoral representation review following notice given by the Minister for Local Government under section 219C of the Local Government Act 1989.

What does a review achieve?
The purpose of an electoral representation review is to provide fair and equitable representation for all voters. At the end of the review, the VEC will recommend the electoral structure that it considers will provide the best opportunity for voters’ interests to be represented on the Council.

What will the VEC consider?
The VEC will look at the number of councillors, the number of wards and the ward boundaries in the municipality. It will consider the electoral structures of comparable municipalities, communities of interest, demographics and growth potential. Arguments and information presented in submissions, from any person or group, will also be considered during the review (see the VEC Guide for Submissions).

Step 1 Information session: Thursday, 28 February 2008 – 6.30 pm
- Meeting rooms 1 and 2, Springvale Council Offices, 405 Springvale Road, Springvale

Step 2 Preliminary submissions close: Wednesday, 12 March 2008 – 5.00 pm

Step 3 Preliminary Report released: Monday, 7 April 2008

Step 4 Response submissions close: Thursday, 1 May 2008 – 5.00 pm

Step 5 Public Hearing: Thursday, 8 May 2008 – 6.30 pm
- Meeting Rooms 1 and 2, Springvale Council Offices, 405 Springvale Road, Springvale
- Those wishing to speak must request to do so in their response submission.

- The VEC will lodge its recommendation in a Final Report with the Minister for Local Government.

For a Guide for Submissions or further information, call 13 18 32 or visit www.vec.vic.gov.au
Electoral Representation Reviews

The Minister for Local Government has given notice under section 219C of the Local Government Act 1989 that there are to be electoral representation reviews of the following councils:

- Greater Geelong City Council
- Queenscliffe Borough Council
- Melton Shire Council
- Moonee Valley City Council
- Maroondah City Council
- Nillumbik Shire Council
- Boroondara City Council
- Bass Coast Shire Council
- Greater Dandenong City Council

The councils have appointed the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to conduct the reviews.

What are the reviews about?

The aim of the reviews is to ensure fair and equitable electoral representation for the voters of these municipalities. For each municipality, the VEC will recommend to the Minister for Local Government:

- the appropriate number of councillors;
- whether the municipality should be un subdivided or divided into wards; and
- if the municipality is to be divided into wards, how many wards there should be, the number of councillors per ward and the ward boundaries.

Under an un subdivided or a multi-councillor ward structure, councillors are elected through proportional representation. Under a single-councillor ward structure, councillors are elected using preferential voting. With each system, voters mark their ballot papers in the same way.

What will the VEC consider?

The VEC will consider the electoral structures of comparable municipalities, communities of interest, demographics and growth potential. Arguments and information presented in submissions, from any person or group, will also be considered during the review.

Making a submission

Further information about making a submission can be found in the Guides for Submissions. Submissions can be made by mail, fax or email and must reach the VEC by 5.00 pm on the following dates:

- Greater Geelong City Council: 25 Feb 2008
- Queenscliffe Borough Council: 25 Feb 2008
- Melton Shire Council: 26 Feb 2008
- Moonee Valley City Council: 3 Mar 2008
- Maroondah City Council: 4 Mar 2008
- Nillumbik Shire Council: 5 Mar 2008
- Boroondara City Council: 11 Mar 2008
- Bass Coast Shire Council: 11 Mar 2008
- Greater Dandenong City Council: 12 Mar 2008

For a Guide for Submissions or further information, call 13 18 32 or visit www.vec.vic.gov.au

For enquiries in languages other than English call our interpreting service:

- Arabic 9209 0100
- Bosnian 9209 0191
- Cambodian 9209 0192
- Chinese (Cantonese) 9209 0101
- Croatian 9209 0102
- Dari 9209 0193
- Greek 9209 0103
- Italian 9209 0104
- Korean 9209 0194
- Macedonian 9209 0105
- Mandarin 9209 0106
- Persian 9209 0195
- Russian 9209 0196
- Somali 9209 0107
- Spanish 9209 0108
- Turkish 9209 0110
- Vietnamese 9209 0111
- All other non-English languages 9209 0112

Electoral representation review publications are available in large print on request.
Electoral Representation Review
Greater Dandenong City Council

Preliminary Report
The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) has released the Preliminary Report for the electoral representation review, detailing four possible electoral structures for the municipality. Feedback on these options is encouraged and will assist the VEC to recommend the structure it considers will provide the best opportunity for fair and equitable representation for voters.

The City of Greater Dandenong is currently a subdivided municipality with eleven councillors elected from eleven single-councilor wards.

The maps to the right detail the preliminary options put forward for the City of Greater Dandenong.

Where is the Report available?
Copies of the Preliminary Report are available from:
- The Greater Dandenong City Council offices, 397-405 Springvale Road, Springvale;
- the VEC website, www.vec.vic.gov.au; and
- the VEC on 13 18 32.

Final Report, Monday, 26 May 2008
A variety of information, including arguments presented by the community, will be considered when compiling the VEC's recommendation which will then be sent to the Minister for Local Government.

Electoral representation review publications are available in large print on request.

Response submissions, Thursday, 1 May 2008 – 5.00 pm
Feedback should be provided in response submissions, which will be made available to the public on the VEC website. The VEC recommends obtaining a copy of the Preliminary Report and consulting its Guide for Submissions. These documents can be obtained free of charge from the VEC. Submissions can be:
- posted to the VEC at Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne Vic. 3000;
- emailed to dandenong.review@vec.vic.gov.au; or
- faxed to (03) 9629 9330.

Submissions must include the following information:
- name;
- address;
- telephone contact number; and
- whether you wish to speak at the public hearing in support of your submission.

Submissions must reach the VEC by Thursday, 1 May 2008 – 5.00 pm.

Late submissions will not be accepted.

Public hearing, Thursday, 8 May 2008 – 6.30 pm
The hearing will be held at:
- Meeting Rooms 1 and 2, Springvale Council Offices, 397-405 Springvale Road, Springvale.

You must indicate if you wish to present your submission at the public hearing.

For further information, telephone 9209 0112.
Which electoral structure do you think will best serve the needs of your community?

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) is conducting an electoral representation review in the City of Greater Dandenong and is asking the public to get involved.

The purpose of a representation review is to provide fair and equitable representation for all voters. After looking at the number of councillors, the number of wards and the ward boundaries, the VEC will recommend the electoral structure that it considers will provide the best opportunity for voters’ interests to be represented on the Council. The VEC will consider comparable municipalities, communities of interest, demographics and growth potential.

Any changes resulting from the review will apply at the local council elections in November 2008.

"Anyone interested in the review should attend the public information session on 28 February," said the Victorian Electoral Commissioner, Mr Steve Tully.

The information session, explaining the process of the review and public submissions, will be held on:

- Thursday, 28 February 2008 at 6.30 pm
  Meeting Rooms 1 and 2, Springvale Council Offices, 405 Springvale Road, Springvale

“Public feedback is an important part of the process and the VEC will consider all evidence and arguments provided in written submissions,” said Mr Tully. A letter is perfectly acceptable, as long as it deals with the matters covered by the review. “If you are unable to attend the information session, contact the VEC for a Guide for Submissions.”

Preliminary submissions, which can be mailed, faxed or emailed, must reach the VEC before 5.00 pm on Wednesday, 12 March 2008. The VEC’s Preliminary Report will be released on 7 April, and further feedback will be invited on the preliminary options contained in the report. These submissions must be received by Thursday, 1 May, 5.00 pm.

A public hearing will be held on Thursday, 8 May. The hearing is open to the public, but those wishing to speak must request to do so in their response submission. The Final Report will be lodged with the Minister for Local Government on 26 May 2008.

For more information, call the VEC on 13 18 32 or visit www.vec.vic.gov.au

----------ENDS----------

Thursday, 28 February 2008 - 6.30 pm – information session
Wednesday, 12 March 2008 - 5.00 pm – close for preliminary submissions
Monday, 7 April 2008 – the VEC’s Preliminary Report released containing its preliminary options
Thursday, 1 May 2008 - 5.00 pm – close for response submissions about the Preliminary Report
Thursday, 8 May 2008 - 6.30 pm – public hearing
Monday, 26 May 2008 – the VEC will lodge its Final Report with the Minister for Local Government
Media Fact Sheet

Media releases are available from the VEC website http://www.vec.vic.gov.au/rrreleases.html

For further media information:
Claire Macdonald
Victorian Electoral Commission
Tel: 9299 0757

Map of the City of Greater Dandenong

The map below shows the current ward boundaries and the voter numbers and deviations from the average number of voters per councillor as at 1 February 2008.

CLEELAND WARD
Voters: 7782
Deviation: -6.91%

DANDENONG WARD
Voters: 8395
Deviation: +4.27%

DANDENONG NORTH WARD
Voters: 8908
Deviation: +22.37%

KEYSBOROUGH WARD
Voters: 7994
Deviation: -8.91%

KEYSBOROUGH SOUTH WARD
Voters: 10454
Deviation: +22.37%

LYNDHURST WARD
Voters: 8334
Deviation: -6.43%

LYNDHURST WARD
Voters: 8334
Deviation: -6.43%

NOBLE PARK WARD
Voters: 8864
Deviation: +3.76%

NOBLE PARK NORTH WARD
Voters: 8881
Deviation: +3.96%

SPRINGVALE CENTRAL WARD
Voters: 7999
Deviation: -6.37%

SPRINGVALE NORTH WARD
Voters: 7976
Deviation: -6.64%

SPRINGVALE SOUTH WARD
Voters: 8383
Deviation: -1.87%
HAVE YOUR SAY ON YOUR COUNCIL

The Victorian Electoral Commission is now asking for feedback on its Preliminary Report for the electoral representation review of the City of Greater Dandenong. The review looks at the number of councillors and the number of wards required to provide fair and equitable representation for all voters.

The City of Greater Dandenong is currently a subdivided municipality with eleven councillors elected from eleven single-councillor wards. The VEC’s preliminary preference is for eleven councillors to be elected from three three-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward.

An additional three options have also been provided in the Report for consideration and public comment.

The VEC encourages public input on the options and will be accepting written submissions until Thursday, 1 May, 5.00 pm.

At the Public Hearing, to be held on 8 May at 6.30 pm, submitters who have requested to speak in support of their submissions will be able to do so. The hearing will take place at Meeting Rooms 1 and 2, Council Offices, 397-405 Springvale Road, Springvale and is open to the public.

For a copy of the Preliminary Report, visit the VEC website at www.vec.vic.gov.au.

Copies are also available at the Council Offices, 397-405 Springvale Road, Springvale, and at the VEC office, Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000. Further information is available by calling the VEC on 13 18 32.

The VEC’s Final Report, containing a final recommendation, will be lodged with the Minister for Local Government on Monday, 26 May 2008.

– ENDS –

Media releases are available from the VEC website http://www.vec.vic.gov.au/rrreleases.html

For further media information:

Claire Macdonald
Victorian Electoral Commission
Tel: 9299 0757
MAPS OF PRELIMINARY OPTIONS FOR
GREATER DANDENONG CITY COUNCIL

PRELIMINARY PREFERRED OPTION:
eleven councillors to be elected from three three-councillor wards and one two-councillor ward

FIRST PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVE OPTION:
eleven councillors to be elected from four two-councillor wards and one three-councillor ward
SECOND PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVE OPTION:
nine councillors to be elected from three three-councillor wards

THIRD PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVE OPTION:
nine councillors to be elected from three three-councillor wards, with boundaries different
to the second preliminary alternative option
**9.3 Information leaflet**

Current structure of the City of Greater Dandenong

The City of Greater Dandenong currently elects eleven councillors from eleven single-member wards. Below is a map showing the ward boundaries, voter numbers and voter deviations from the average as at 1 February 2008.

Electional representation review publications are available in large print on request.

**HAVE YOUR SAY ON COUNCIL STRUCTURE**

Electoral Representation Review of the Greater Dandenong City Council

Conducted by the Victorian Electoral Commission

**Key steps in the review**

**Step 1**
Information Session
Thursday, 28 February 2008
Meeting Rooms 1 and 2, Springvale Council Offices, 405 Springvale Road, Springvale 6.30 pm

All interested people and groups are invited to attend.

**Step 2**
Preliminary Submissions
Class: 5.00 pm Wednesday, 12 March 2008

Any person or group may make a submission to the VEC. The VEC recommends consulting the Guide for Submissions.

**Step 3**
Preliminary Report
Monday, 7 April 2008

The VEC will release a Preliminary Report containing its preferred option(s).

**Step 4**
Response Submissions
Class: 5.00 pm Thursday, 1 May 2008

Any person or group may make a submission to the VEC about the Preliminary Report.

**Step 5**
Public Hearing
Thursday, 8 May 2008
Meeting Rooms 1 and 2, Springvale Council Offices, 405 Springvale Road, Springvale 6.30 pm

People will be able to speak in support of their response submissions.

**Step 6**
Final Report
Monday, 26 May 2008

The VEC will lodge a Final Report, containing its recommendations, with the Minister for Local Government.

For more information and for copies of the Guide for Submissions, Preliminary Report or Final Report contact the VEC:

www.vec.vic.gov.au

13 18 32

Victorian Electoral Commission

Page 34
CHECKLIST:

Before you send in your submission:

- Have you included your name, address and telephone contact number?
- Do you understand that your submission will be made public?
- Have you given reasons for the model(s) you are suggesting?

If you are making a response submission to the Preliminary Report:

- Have you focused your discussion on the models proposed in the Preliminary Report?
- Have you indicated whether or not you would like to speak to the submission at the public hearing?

In writing your submission, you might like to consider the following questions (you do not need to answer every question in order to make a useful submission):

The number of councillors:

- Have you suggested a number between 5 and 12 (as required by legislation)?
- If the number of councillors you have suggested varies substantially from the numbers in similar-sized municipalities of a similar type, have you explained why?

The electoral structures:

- Have you indicated whether you want the municipality to be subdivided or unsubdivided?
- Have you explained why your preferred structure would best suit your municipality?

If you think that the municipality should be subdivided into wards:

- Have you indicated whether you want single-councillor wards, multi-councillor wards or a combination of both?
- Have you suggested ward names and given reasons for those names?
Background

What is an electoral representation review?

An electoral representation review examines the electoral structure of a local council. It considers:

- the number of councillors in a municipality;
- whether a municipality should be unsubdivided or subdivided into wards; and
- if it should be subdivided, what the ward boundaries should be.

In addition, the review must make sure that, within each municipality, the number of voters represented by each councillor in each ward is within 10% of the average number of voters per councillor. That way, each person’s vote has the same value.

Another important element to these considerations is that, according to the Local Government Act 1989 (the Act), wards with only one councillor must elect that councillor using preferential voting, and wards with two or more councillors must elect them via proportional representation. If a municipality is unsubdivided, then all of its councillors must be elected using proportional representation.

When do representation reviews take place, and who conducts them?

The Local Government Act specifies that:

- electoral representation reviews must be conducted before every second council election; and
- a council must appoint an Electoral Commission to undertake the review.

On completion of the review, the Electoral Commission makes a recommendation to the Minister for Local Government, who then has the power to act on it.

This system of electoral representation reviews came into effect at the end of 2003 as a result of amendments to the Act. The first representation review for each municipality under this system takes place at a time specified by the Minister for Local Government by a notice in the Victoria Government Gazette. The first representation reviews to be carried out under the amended Act took place in 2004.

On 19 March 2007 the Minister for Local Government gave notice under section 219C of the Local Government Act that an electoral representation review is to be conducted for the City of Greater Dandenong. The Greater Dandenong City Council has appointed the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to conduct the review.

How did the current electoral structures come about, and on what were they based?

Most of Victoria’s councils have undergone reviews by the VEC. The majority of unreviewed municipalities still operate under structures established by the commissioners appointed during the restructures of the 1990s. The commissioners did not have any State-wide reference available to them when considering the appropriate number of councillors and electoral structures for their municipalities. As a consequence, there remain substantial differences between similar municipalities across Victoria. Subsequent to these reforms, individual councils conducted electoral reviews.
What is the purpose of a representation review?

Section 219D of the Local Government Act 1989 specifies that the purpose of a representation review is to achieve “fair and equitable representation for the persons who are entitled to vote at a general election of the Council.”

To achieve this, the VEC proceeds on the basis of three main principles:

1: to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is within 10% of the average number of voters per councillor for that municipality

Populations are continually changing – they grow in some areas and decline in others. Over time, these changes can lead to some wards having larger or smaller numbers of voters. As part of a representation review, the VEC needs to correct any imbalances that have come about. The VEC also tries to make sure that the boundaries it sets will continue to provide equitable representation until the next review is due in eight years, by taking account of likely future changes.

2: to take a consistent, State-wide approach to the total number of councillors

Regarding the number of councillors, the VEC has adopted as a guide the numbers of councillors in similar-sized municipalities of similar categories within Victoria. In addition, the VEC considers any special circumstances that warrant the municipality having more or fewer councillors than similar municipalities.

3: to ensure that communities of interest are as fairly represented as possible

Every municipality contains a number of communities of interest (see page 8). The electoral structure should be designed to take these into account where practicable. This is important for assisting the elected councillors to be effective representatives of the people in their particular municipality.

What can't a representation review do?

The review cannot deal with the external boundaries of the municipality, or such matters as whether the municipality should be divided into two separate municipalities or amalgamated with another municipality.

On what does the VEC base its recommendations?

The VEC bases its recommendations on a number of factors, including the following:

- internal research specifically relating to the municipality under review;
- the VEC's experience from its work with other municipalities and in similar reviews for State elections;
- the VEC's expertise in mapping, demography and local government; and
- careful consideration of all input from the public in both written and verbal submissions made during the course of the review.

Input from the public is an important part of the process, but it is not the only factor considered. The VEC's recommendations are not made by a "straw poll" of the number of submissions supporting particular models. The VEC seeks to ensure fair and equitable representation for all voters of the municipality. This means carefully considering all views expressed in submissions from the public, but also considering other factors, such as giving representation to communities of interest (including those communities of interest which may not be particularly vocal).

About the VEC

The Victorian Electoral Commission is an independent statutory authority established under Victoria's Electoral Act 2002. The VEC is not subject to ministerial direction or control in the performance of its responsibilities. The VEC's main functions include:

- conducting parliamentary elections and by-elections;
- conducting local government elections and by-elections (when appointed by councils);
- conducting representation reviews for councils;
- maintaining an accurate and up-to-date register of electors and preparing rolls for elections; and
- contributing to public understanding of elections and electoral matters through information and education programmes.

In performing these functions, the VEC acts as an independent, impartial authority, acting transparently and with integrity.

About the panel

The VEC's recommendations are ultimately made by the Electoral Commissioner, Steve Tully. In reaching a decision, he is aided by the Deputy Electoral Commissioner, the manager of the Electoral Enrolment Branch (who is the manager responsible for the review process), and a number of VEC staff. These include teams with expertise in mapping and boundary modelling, and in policy and public consultation. He also receives advice from a consultant with expertise in local government - Mr Vern Robson.

The public hearing following the Preliminary Report will be attended by at least two representatives from the VEC and Mr Robson.
The review process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14 January 2008</td>
<td>The review begins</td>
<td>The VEC begins conducting research and preparing material for the public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 January 2008</td>
<td>Notification of the public</td>
<td>A notice detailing the process for the review and calling for submissions is placed in the Herald Sun, The Age, The Journal, the Bandonong Leader and the Bandonong Star.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A leaflet outlining the purpose and process of the review is delivered to customer service centres and libraries.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 February 2008</td>
<td>Information session</td>
<td>An information session on the review process is held at:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Meeting rooms 1 and 2, Springvale Council Offices, 405 Springvale Road, Springvale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 January 2008</td>
<td>Information session</td>
<td>Anyone interested in making a submission is advised to attend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 March 2008</td>
<td>Preliminary submissions</td>
<td>Preliminary submissions are your chance to contribute your views and local knowledge about any issues relevant to the review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Meeting rooms 1 and 2, Springvale Council Offices, 405 Springvale Road, Springvale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 April 2008</td>
<td>Preliminary Report released</td>
<td>Based on the VEC’s research, including information presented by the public, the VEC formulates a series of different models for how the electoral structure of the City of Greater Bandonong could be arranged. The models that best fit the VEC’s aim of fairness and equity of representation are presented and explained in the Preliminary Report. For details of how to get a copy of the Report, see below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 May 2008</td>
<td>Closing date for preliminary submissions</td>
<td>Preliminary submissions are your chance to contribute your views and local knowledge about any issues relevant to the review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 May 2008</td>
<td>Public hearing</td>
<td>A public hearing is held at:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Meeting Rooms 1 and 2, Springvale Council Offices, 405 Springvale Road, Springvale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 May 2008</td>
<td>Public hearing</td>
<td>People who state in their response submissions to the Preliminary Report that they want to speak in support of their submissions may do so at this public hearing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 May 2008</td>
<td>Closing date for response submissions on the Preliminary Report</td>
<td>Any person or group, including the Council, may make a response submission to the VEC about the Preliminary Report. This is your chance to present any additional arguments regarding which of the VEC's models you believe best represents the voters of the City of Greater Bandonong. Late submissions will not be accepted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 May 2008</td>
<td>Final Report</td>
<td>After considering any written submissions relating to the Preliminary Report, and information provided at the public hearing, the VEC prepares a Final Report making recommendations to the Minister for Local Government. For details of how to get a copy of the Final Report, see page 15.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 May 2008</td>
<td>Final Report</td>
<td>The Minister for Local Government considers the VEC’s recommendations and may make a determination. Any determination will take effect at the next Council election.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Making a submission

Any person or group, including the Council, may make a submission to the VEC.

Submissions do not have to be elaborate documents; a short letter is perfectly acceptable, as long as it addresses matters within the scope of the review (see the checklist inside the front cover of this document).

When can people make submissions?

The VEC accepts submissions at two stages of the review process:

- **Preliminary submissions** should address matters relating to the number of councillors and the electoral structure of the municipality. At this stage, people can suggest any possible models within the constraints as explained in the “Matters to consider” section of this document. The most helpful submissions are generally those that provide clear explanations or evidence for particular viewpoints. Preliminary submissions must be received at the VEC by Wednesday, 12 March 2008 – 5.00 pm. Late submissions will not be accepted.

- **Response submissions** on the Preliminary Report can comment on any issues relating to the review, but are more helpful if they comment on the preferred option and/or the alternative option(s). Alternative models will not generally be considered at this stage, as there is no further opportunity to put those models to the public for comment. Response submissions should indicate whether the person making the submission wishes to speak at a public hearing in support of his or her submission. Response submissions must be received at the VEC by Thursday, 1 May 2008 – 5.00 pm. Late submissions will not be accepted.

There will be a **public hearing** for people who want to speak in support of their response submissions on Thursday, 8 May 2008 – 6.30 pm. People wishing to speak must request to do so in their response submissions.

Where should submissions be sent?

Submissions can be sent to the VEC in the following ways:

- posted to Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, Vic. 3000;
- emailed to dandenong.review@vec.vic.gov.au; or
- faxed to (03) 9629 9330.

Submissions must include the name, address and telephone contact number of the person making the submission. Without this information, the submission will not be accepted.

Public access to submissions

Once lodged, submissions will be available to the public at:

- the VEC office at Level 8, 505 Little Collins Street, Melbourne; and
- the VEC website www.vec.vic.gov.au

The VEC will publish all submissions received by the due date on its website. The name and locality of the person making the submission will also be published. The person’s telephone number, street address and signature will not be published. The reason for making submissions available to the public is to ensure transparency in the electoral representation review process.
Matters to consider when preparing submissions

There are many matters to be considered when determining the electoral structure of a municipality. In your submission, you might try to take all of the issues into account, or you might just concentrate on one issue that you wish to bring to the VEC's attention. The VEC's job is to take a look at all of the relevant matters and to reach the best overall solution, based both on its own research and submissions received from the public.

Below are some of the main matters you might like to consider.

How many councillors should there be?

Under the Local Government Act 1989, the number of councillors in every municipality must be between five and twelve inclusive (s.58(1)). The Act does not specify how to decide what is the appropriate number, but the VEC has identified the following matters to consider.

Parliament has provided a range for the number of councillors to allow for municipalities with large numbers of voters and municipalities with smaller numbers. The number of voters in each municipality vary across Victoria from approximately 4,000 to almost 160,000. The VEC applies these provisions of the Act in a logical way, with those municipalities that have the largest numbers of voters having the most councillors, and those municipalities that have the least numbers of voters having fewer councillors.

The VEC has produced a table that lists each municipality and its area, number of voters and number of councillors (see the end of this document). The table differentiates between metropolitan municipalities, metropolitan/rural fringe municipalities, regional municipalities with urban areas and rural municipalities in recognition of the different circumstances and needs of these categories of municipalities. This table is a valuable reference point in considering the appropriate number of councillors. This information enables the VEC to compare the municipality being reviewed to other municipalities with similar voter numbers and areas.

The VEC also considers whether the number of voters in the municipality is expected to increase or decline in the period between reviews (eight years). Population forecasts produced by the Department of Infrastructure are used to assist the VEC in making its assessment.

In addition, the VEC considers any special issues or circumstances that may require a municipality to have more or fewer councillors than would otherwise be the case. These might include such issues or circumstances as:

- significant population growth within the municipality;
- an especially mobile or transient population;
- cultural and linguistic diversity within the community;
- a large proportion of older residents who may have special interests and needs;
- a wide geographic distribution of voters within a large municipality; or
- a large number of communities of interest (see below).

Although the legislation allows for any number of councillors between five and twelve, the VEC generally prefers to recommend an uneven number. With an even number of councillors, tied votes are generally more common. Often tied votes are resolved by a mayoral casting vote, which effectively gives one councillor two votes and the right to make determinations on evenly divided issues. The VEC does not consider that this provides fair and equitable representation. This situation may be further exacerbated if a council's efforts to elect a mayor result in a tied vote. In such circumstances, the mayor may be selected by lot rather than through the support of a majority of the councillors.

Should the municipality be un subdivided or divided into wards?

A municipality can either be un subdivided, with all councillors elected "at large" by all of the voters, or it can be subdivided into a number of wards. Both electoral structures have advantages and disadvantages, and which structure is best for any individual municipality will depend on the municipality's particular circumstances.

The City of Greater Dandenong is currently a subdivided municipality with eleven councillors elected from eleven single-councillor wards.

The tables at the end of this document list all of Victoria's municipalities and their electoral structures.

Many factors must be taken into account in determining the most appropriate electoral structure for a municipality.

Communities of interest

An important part of achieving "fair and equitable representation" is making sure that communities of interest are appropriately represented. Communities of interest are groups of people who share a range of common concerns or aspirations. They are different from "interest groups" or "pressure groups" which may have little English, require assistance with housing and need help finding employment. Communities of interest may also include ethnic groups, retired people, the unemployed or many other groupings of people.

Communities of interest may occur where people are linked with each other geographically (e.g. a town or valley) or economically, such as where people work in similar industries (e.g. tourism) or where people work in mutually-dependant industries (e.g. fruit growers, transporters and canners). Communities of interest may also appear where people share a number of special needs because of similar circumstances (such as new immigrants, who may have little English, require assistance with housing and need help finding employment). Communities of interest may also include ethnic groups, retired people, the unemployed or many other groupings of people.

Communities of interest are important in electoral representation reviews when they have similar needs from their local government. In such cases, it is important to endeavour to ensure that communities of interest have the opportunity to be fairly represented on councils. There are a number of ways to take account of communities of interest, depending on how they are distributed geographically. For example:
If: then fair representation may best be achieved by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a community of interest is compact geographically.</td>
<td>creating a ward with boundaries reflecting that community of interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a community of interest is a widespread minority.</td>
<td>creating multi-councillor wards with proportional representation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>there are numerous minority communities of interest within a municipality.</td>
<td>combining the communities of interest, so that any elected councillors would be responsible to all of these groups.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are also many other ways to take communities of interest into account.

Other factors considered
In developing options, communities of interest are not the only basis for determining boundaries. A range of other factors must also be taken into consideration. Often these factors are competing and the VEC must find an option that provides the best balance of all matters to be considered. These factors include:

- ensuring that the number of voters represented by each councillor meet the legislative 10% variation requirement;
- creating wards with manageable areas and taking account of geographic features, such as terrain and rivers;
- considering travel routes, modes of transport available and communication networks;
- anticipating likely changes to voter numbers in various locations over time; and
- governance related issues.

The following table list characteristics that are commonly considered to be associated with the different possible electoral structures and may be of use in deciding which structure most suits your municipality. These opinions have come from a wide range of sources, including Local Government Victoria and submissions to previous reviews.

### Positive Features | Less Positive Features
--- | ---
Promotes the concept of a municipality-wide focus, with councillors being elected by and concerned for the municipality as a whole, rather than parochial interests. | May lead to significant communities of interest and points of view being unrepresented. |
Gives residents and ratepayers a choice of councillors to approach with their concerns. | May lead to confusion of responsibilities and duplication of effort on the part of councillors. |
Each voter has the opportunity to express a preference for every candidate for the Council election. | Large numbers of candidates might be confusing for voters. |
Removes the need to define internal ward boundaries. | May lead to councillors being relatively inaccessible for residents of parts of the municipality. |
Results in a simple, less expensive voter roll for elections as compared with separate vote rolls for individual wards. | May be difficult for voters to assess the performances of individual councillors. |

#### Options for division into wards
If the municipality is to be divided into wards, there are three options:

- single-councillor wards;
- multi-councillor wards; and
- combinations of single and multi-councillor wards.

The Local Government Act specifies that wards with only one representative must elect that representative via preferential voting, whereas multi-councillor wards and unsubdivided municipalities must elect their representatives via proportional representation. As far as voters are concerned on the day, it makes no difference. In practice, ballot papers look the same and are filled out in the same way, regardless of whether the candidates are being elected by proportional representation or by preferential voting. Whether a ward elects councillors via proportional representation or preferential voting can sometimes make a difference as to whether or not communities of interest are fairly represented.

### Unsubdivided municipalities
Unsubdivided municipalities must elect their councillors by proportional representation (see more on this point below).

Some commonly expressed views about unsubdivided structures are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Features</th>
<th>Less Positive Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promotes the concept of a municipality-wide focus, with councillors being elected by and concerned for the municipality as a whole, rather than parochial interests.</td>
<td>May lead to significant communities of interest and points of view being unrepresented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives residents and ratepayers a choice of councillors to approach with their concerns.</td>
<td>May lead to confusion of responsibilities and duplication of effort on the part of councillors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each voter has the opportunity to express a preference for every candidate for the Council election.</td>
<td>Large numbers of candidates might be confusing for voters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removes the need to define internal ward boundaries.</td>
<td>May lead to councillors being relatively inaccessible for residents of parts of the municipality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results in a simple, less expensive voter roll for elections as compared with separate vote rolls for individual wards.</td>
<td>May be difficult for voters to assess the performances of individual councillors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Single-councillor wards**

Some commonly expressed views about single-councillor wards are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Features</th>
<th>Less Positive Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Councillors are more likely to be truly local representatives, easily accessible to residents and aware of local issues.</td>
<td>Councillors may be elected on minor or parochial issues and lack a perspective of what policies benefit the municipality as a whole.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major geographical communities of interest are likely to be represented.</td>
<td>Ward boundaries may divide communities of interest, and may be difficult to define.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voters may have a restricted choice of candidates in elections for individual wards.</td>
<td>Small populations in each ward may make ward boundaries more susceptible to change caused by demographic shifts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where major groups support candidates in multiple wards, it is possible that one group can dominate the council.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Multi-councillor wards**

A multi-councillor ward structure results in fewer but larger wards than a single-councillor ward structure. Some commonly expressed views about multi-councillor wards are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Features</th>
<th>Less Positive Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This structure supports the accommodation of a whole community of interest (such as a sizeable town or group of suburbs) within a ward.</td>
<td>Groups may form within the council based on multi-councillor wards, leading to possible division between councillors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on issues may be broader than for single-councillor wards (though councillors may be more locally focussed than in an unsubdivided municipality).</td>
<td>Very local issues may be overridden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councillors may be more accessible to residents.</td>
<td>In very large wards, councillors may not be accessible for residents in parts of the ward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councillors may share workloads more effectively.</td>
<td>Duplication or gaps may occur if councillors do not communicate or share their workloads effectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward boundaries are likely to be easy to identify and less susceptible to change as a result of population growth or decline than for single-councillor wards.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Combination of single-councillor and multi-councillor wards**

Some commonly expressed views about combined systems are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Features</th>
<th>Less Positive Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A large community of interest can be included within a multi-councillor ward, and a smaller community of interest can be included within a single-councillor ward. This structure accommodates differences in population across a municipality, and allows small communities to be separately represented.</td>
<td>Electors in single-councillor wards may expect that their councillors will be more influential than their numbers suggest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear ward boundaries are more likely.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Governance related issues**

A number of governance related issues are also considered. The VEC notes, though, that there are advantages and disadvantages to all types of structure with respect to governance. The following table shows some of the directly conflicting points of view that have been expressed about governance related issues in single-councillor wards as opposed to multi-councillor wards and unsubdivided structures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Features</th>
<th>Less Positive Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Councillors are more accessible to residents.</td>
<td>Voters have a choice of which councillor to approach – they may choose one more akin to their interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councillors are more aware of very local issues.</td>
<td>Workloads for councillors are more manageable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councillors are more accountable.</td>
<td>Councils are more likely to reach consensus on issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councils are more likely to represent groups to be represented and different views on council can be beneficial.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In conducting the reviews, the VEC's goal is to provide fair and equitable representation for the voters. The VEC considers that the primary consideration in this is to provide structures that help people to elect a council that represents their views, interests and needs. Factors relating to governance issues, particularly those which apply after the election, are often given less weighting in the VEC's considerations than factors leading to an appropriate spread of representation in the first instance (such as capturing diversity and communities of interest).
**Vote counting systems**

The vote counting system is another important factor to take into account when considering whether to have single-councillor wards, multi-councillor wards or unsubdivided municipalities. In single-councillor wards, councillors must be elected by preferential voting. In unsubdivided municipalities and multi-councillor wards, councillors must be elected by proportional representation. Under either system, people still vote in the same way.

- **Proportional representation** may return quite different results to the old system. Proportional representation should return candidates that are more representative of voters’ choices and makes it more difficult for candidates to be elected as part of a ticket.

**How should ward boundaries be drawn?**

**Getting the numbers right**

If the City of Greater Dandenong is to remain divided into wards, the ward boundaries have to comply with legal requirements. Section 2190 of the Local Government Act 1989 requires that:

- the number of voters represented by each councillor must be within 10% of the average number of voters per councillor for that municipality; and
- the ward boundaries must provide a fair and equitable division of the municipal district.

Where there are multi-councillor wards, the number of voters represented by each councillor cannot be more than 10% outside the average number for all councillors. At present Keysborough South Ward is outside the 10% limit.

**Other considerations**

The Act does not prescribe any more details to define what constitutes a fair and equitable division of the municipality. However, the following criteria are useful in considering and (where possible) deciding on proposed ward boundaries:

- the boundaries should take account of communities of interest;
- the boundaries should follow clear lines, such as major roads, rivers and other natural features;
- growing areas should not be concentrated in one ward, but should be spread over several wards; and
- the boundaries should take account of likely population changes, by setting the number of voters in wards with high growth potential somewhat below the average, and the number of voters in wards with little growth potential somewhat above the average. This approach will help ensure that the boundaries stay within the 10% tolerance for a longer period, avoiding the need for frequent redrawing of boundaries.

In developing ward boundaries, the VEC aims to achieve the best possible balance among these criteria.
What should wards be called?

There is a variety of possible approaches to the naming of wards, including:

- **Place names**: A number of municipalities name their wards after localities in the wards. This approach is useful where ward boundaries closely align with localities. However, it can lead to people in smaller localities within a ward feeling overlooked, and may cause confusion if the locality that a ward is named after cuts across a ward boundary;

- **Compass directions**: This is the current approach in, for example, the City of Whittlesea, where the wards are East, North and West. It is straightforward. It is of most use where the location of the wards is closely aligned to compass directions;

- **Names of historic buildings**: This is a way of celebrating the municipality's heritage;

- **Names of natural features**: Using the names of natural features such as hills or streams can be a way of identifying wards without the complications of locality names. The features would need to be well known and relevant to the particular wards;

- **Names of pioneers and former prominent citizens**: This is a way of recognising important former residents. It is most appropriate when the person is closely associated with the area covered by the ward; and

- **Indigenous names**: This is a way of recognising the municipality's Indigenous heritage. However, the use of Indigenous names could be seen as being tokenistic if the names are not relevant to areas within the municipality.

Getting copies of the Preliminary and Final Reports

Copies of the Preliminary and Final Reports will be available from the VEC website, www.vec.vic.gov.au, by contacting the VEC on 13 18 32, and at the City of Greater Dandenong Council offices.

When the Preliminary Report is released, a notice in The Journal, the Dandenong Leader and the Dandenong Star will specify how people can make a written submission in response to the Report.

The Preliminary Report will be available from Monday, 7 April 2008.

The Final Report will be released on Monday, 26 May 2008.

The Current Structure

The City of Greater Dandenong is a subdivided municipality with eleven single-councillor wards. Councillors are elected by preferential voting.

The map shows the municipality boundaries and the estimated voter numbers and deviations from the average number of voters per councillor as at 2 January 2008. Actual data will be available from the VEC from February 2008.

A break-down of voter numbers by locality will be available from the VEC website – www.vec.vic.gov.au – or by calling the VEC on 13 18 32. This can be used to see more precisely where voters are located within the municipality. A break-down of voter numbers by Census Collector District is available on request.

The City of Greater Dandenong at a glance

The City of Greater Dandenong was formed in 1994 when Dandenong, Noble Park and Springvale were joined as one municipality with the addition of Keysborough, Lyndhurst and Bangholme.

Greater Dandenong is located approximately 24 kilometres south-east of Melbourne and covers an area of 129 square kilometres. Major centres include Dandenong, Springvale and Noble Park.

The municipality has one of Melbourne's largest industrial regions and its central activities district is Melbourne's second largest retail and commercial centre. Businesses in the...
municipality are a key provider of employment in Melbourne’s south-east. Important industries in the municipality include metal, beverage, motor vehicle and malt manufacturing, as well as food processing and distribution. The municipality has comparatively high proportions of labourers, technicians, tradespeople and machinery operators.

Greater Dandenong is one of the most ethnically diverse areas in Victoria and is home to residents from 156 different birthplaces. Over half of the municipality’s population were born overseas, the most common origins being Vietnam, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, India and China. After English, the most common languages spoken at home are Vietnamese, Khmer, Cantonese, Greek and Italian. In addition, over 900 humanitarian immigrants settle in the municipality each year, coming from countries such as Sudan, Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, Egypt, Kenya, Ethiopia and Burma. This accounts for a quarter of metropolitan Melbourne's annual total humanitarian immigrant intake. The municipality has a greater proportion of people identifying themselves as being of Buddhist, Islam and Eastern Orthodox faiths than Victoria as a whole.

Community profile

Trends in statistical data can assist with identifying and mapping communities of interest, which may be localised in a particular area or across larger parts of the municipality. The VEC's preliminary research indicates that there are observable differences across the City of Greater Dandenong that may indicate communities of interest.

The City of Greater Dandenong is amongst the fastest growing metropolitan municipalities, with its population expected to increase by 4.68% in the years from 2008 to 2016. This rate is, however, relatively small when compared to municipalities on the metropolitan/rural fringe and some regional areas.

The median age in the municipality is 36, similar to the Victorian median age of 37. The age breakdown in Greater Dandenong is also remarkably similar to Victorian averages, and the metropolitan municipality medians. The suburbs of Springvale and Dandenong have a high proportion of older citizens, with over 16% of the population aged over 65. The ageing population will likely result in a significantly higher proportion of older residents in the municipality in the near future.

There are approximately 45,000 households in the area, 33,000 of which are families. Of these families, 47.7% are couples with children, 29.6% are couples without children, and 20.4% are one-parent families. Couples with children are most prominent in Keysborough and Springvale South, whilst one-parent families are most common in Noble Park and Dandenong. Many families in the municipality with young children are headed by overseas-born parents.

Ethnic diversity is a distinguishing characteristic of the City of Greater Dandenong. Only 40.4% of the population was born in Australia, compared with 69.6% of Victorians generally. Of those not born in Australia, 8.4% were born in Vietnam, 3.7% in Cambodia, 3.1% in Sri Lanka, 3.0% in India and 2.1% in China. Springvale and Dandenong have the highest proportions of residents born overseas.

In the years 2002 to 2007, nearly 13,000 new arrivals settled in the municipality. This accounts for nearly 9% of the total number of new settlers in metropolitan Melbourne. humanitarian settlers have arrived mainly from Sudan, Afghanistan and the former Yugoslavia, while skilled settlers originate mostly from India, Sri Lanka, China and the Philippines. Census data indicate that of overseas-born people who have arrived in the City since 2001, the greatest proportions have settled in Dandenong and Springvale North. In some areas of the municipality, such as parts of the suburbs of Springvale and Dandenong, up to 35% of the population is not fluent in English.

Incomes in Greater Dandenong are lower than in Victoria generally. The median weekly household income in Victoria is $1,022 while in Greater Dandenong it is $770. The suburbs of Dandenong North and Noble Park have significantly higher numbers of public housing tenants than the rest of the municipality. In contrast Lyndhurst and Bangholme have none. The most common industries of employment in Greater Dandenong are manufacturing and food services.

The VEC invites submitters to comment on these findings, and to identify communities of interest perceived within the municipality. Local knowledge and perspectives will be valuable in the development of recommendations for the VEC's Preliminary Report. Submissions may also include comments about whether or not these communities are well-represented under the current structure, and suggestions about whether and how the municipality could be structured so that they may be represented more effectively.

(Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 Census; Social Conditions in Greater Dandenong (available from City of Greater Dandenong Council website); Victorian Local Governance Association social statistics (available from VEGA website); Department of Planning and Community Development website)
Municipality size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>City of Greater Dandenong</th>
<th>Metropolitan municipalities (medians)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area (square km)</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>125,520</td>
<td>117,801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population density</td>
<td>973.0</td>
<td>2,036.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voters (a)</td>
<td>93,109</td>
<td>90,099</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Economic profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>City of Greater Dandenong</th>
<th>Metropolitan municipalities (medians)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major industries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and food services</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry and fishing</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and training</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care and social assistance</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median household income ($/week)</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>1,091</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Population profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>City of Greater Dandenong</th>
<th>Metropolitan municipalities (medians)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age groups (percentages of the population)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-14 years old</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-24 years old</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-54 years old</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55+ years old</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>37.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected population growth (2006-2016)</td>
<td>4.68%</td>
<td>4.07%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Past reviews of similar municipalities

Metropolitan municipalities that the VEC has previously reviewed include Frankston City, the City of Monash, Banyule City and the City of Yarra. The VEC made the following recommendations at the completion of the reviews:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Before review</th>
<th>Final recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frankston City</td>
<td>seven single-councillor wards</td>
<td>three three-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Monash</td>
<td>eight single-councillor wards</td>
<td>one two-councillor ward and three three-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banyule City</td>
<td>seven single-councillor wards</td>
<td>seven single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Frankston City, a three-ward structure was recommended to accommodate the broad geographic communities of interest which were found to exist, such as those related to the rapidly developing residential precinct and the central business district. This structure was recommended over a nine single-councillor ward structure which would potentially split such communities. In Banyule City on the other hand, single-councillor wards were retained in recognition of the presence of distinct geographic communities, some of which were noticeably more disadvantaged than others. Such diversity requires Council to respond differently to the needs of various areas of the municipality, both through service delivery and representation.

In the City of Monash, single-councillor wards were rejected due to the fact that they did not reflect the geographic make-up of the area and would not be able to accommodate predicted extensive growth. Instead, a four ward structure was chosen which would reflect identifiable communities of interest and would also allow for appropriate representation of all the City's voters.

The reports from these and other reviews can be accessed at the VEC website — www.vec.vic.gov.au or by calling 13 18 32.

In conducting the City of Greater Dandenong review, considerations such as these and the structures of similar municipalities will be the starting point. Through its own research and the submission process, the VEC will look carefully for factors specific to the municipality that makes its situation similar to or different from those other municipalities.
### Table: Profiles of municipalities
Voter estimates as at November 2007 - January 2008

#### Metropolitan Municipalities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>municipality</th>
<th>area (km²)</th>
<th>number of voters</th>
<th>number of councillors</th>
<th>number of voters per councillor</th>
<th>population (2006 census)</th>
<th>electoral structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maribyrnong</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>50,039</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7,148</td>
<td>63,141</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarra</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>64,518</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7,169</td>
<td>69,330</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobsons Bay</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>64,936</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9,277</td>
<td>81,459</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayside†</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>68,665</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9,809</td>
<td>87,916</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Phillip</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>71,231</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10,176</td>
<td>85,096</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maroondah*</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>77,739</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11,105</td>
<td>99,330</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonnington</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>80,056</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8,895</td>
<td>92,883</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moonee Valley*</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>80,507</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9,190</td>
<td>107,090</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manningham†</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>86,765</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9,661</td>
<td>109,915</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frankston</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>88,886</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9,876</td>
<td>112,801</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayside†</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>68,665</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9,809</td>
<td>87,916</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Phillip</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>71,231</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10,176</td>
<td>85,096</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maroondah*</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>77,739</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11,105</td>
<td>99,330</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonnington</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>80,056</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8,895</td>
<td>92,883</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moonee Valley*</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>80,507</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9,190</td>
<td>107,090</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manningham†</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>86,765</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9,661</td>
<td>109,915</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frankston</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>88,886</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9,876</td>
<td>112,801</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayside†</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>68,665</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9,809</td>
<td>87,916</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Phillip</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>71,231</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10,176</td>
<td>85,096</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maroondah*</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>77,739</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11,105</td>
<td>99,330</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonnington</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>80,056</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8,895</td>
<td>92,883</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moonee Valley*</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>80,507</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9,190</td>
<td>107,090</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manningham†</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>86,765</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9,661</td>
<td>109,915</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frankston</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>88,886</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9,876</td>
<td>112,801</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Metropolitan/Rural Fringe Municipalities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>municipality</th>
<th>area (km²)</th>
<th>number of voters</th>
<th>number of councillors</th>
<th>number of voters per councillor</th>
<th>population (2006 census)</th>
<th>electoral structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cardinia</td>
<td>1,282</td>
<td>43,473</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6,210</td>
<td>57,115</td>
<td>2 single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrum Downs</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>50,039</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7,148</td>
<td>63,141</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarra Ranges</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>105,257</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11,692</td>
<td>125,520</td>
<td>3 three-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mornington Peninsula</td>
<td>726</td>
<td>139,397</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12,672</td>
<td>136,482</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casey</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>150,231</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13,657</td>
<td>214,960</td>
<td>5 single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Regional Municipalities with Urban Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>municipality</th>
<th>area (km²)</th>
<th>number of voters</th>
<th>number of councillors</th>
<th>number of voters per councillor</th>
<th>population (2006 census)</th>
<th>electoral structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ararat</td>
<td>4,208</td>
<td>9,164</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,309</td>
<td>11,255</td>
<td>unsubdivided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benalla</td>
<td>2,350</td>
<td>10,987</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,570</td>
<td>13,523</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swan Hill‡</td>
<td>6,114</td>
<td>14,503</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2,072</td>
<td>20,633</td>
<td>3 four-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horsham</td>
<td>4,266</td>
<td>14,832</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2,119</td>
<td>18,492</td>
<td>unsubdivided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wangaratta</td>
<td>3,645</td>
<td>20,874</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2,982</td>
<td>26,390</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrnambool</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>27,713</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3,389</td>
<td>30,392</td>
<td>unsubdivided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wodonga</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>24,809</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5,544</td>
<td>33,020</td>
<td>unsubdivided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildura</td>
<td>22,084</td>
<td>36,254</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4,028</td>
<td>49,815</td>
<td>unsubdivided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Shepparton</td>
<td>2,421</td>
<td>40,843</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5,835</td>
<td>57,089</td>
<td>unsubdivided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latrobe</td>
<td>1,425</td>
<td>52,896</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5,877</td>
<td>69,329</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballarat</td>
<td>739</td>
<td>66,825</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7,425</td>
<td>85,196</td>
<td>3 three-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Bendigo</td>
<td>2,999</td>
<td>81,703</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9,078</td>
<td>93,252</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* under review
† structure to come into effect at 2008 municipal elections
‡ reviewed and pending Minister's decision

### Metropolitan/Rural Fringe Municipalities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>municipality</th>
<th>area (km²)</th>
<th>number of voters</th>
<th>number of councillors</th>
<th>number of voters per councillor</th>
<th>population (2006 census)</th>
<th>electoral structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cardinia</td>
<td>1,282</td>
<td>43,473</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6,210</td>
<td>57,115</td>
<td>2 single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrum Downs</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>50,039</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7,148</td>
<td>63,141</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarra Ranges</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>105,257</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11,692</td>
<td>125,520</td>
<td>3 three-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mornington Peninsula</td>
<td>726</td>
<td>139,397</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12,672</td>
<td>136,482</td>
<td>single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casey</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>150,231</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13,657</td>
<td>214,960</td>
<td>5 single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* under review
† structure to come into effect at 2008 municipal elections
‡ reviewed and pending Minister's decision
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rural Municipalities</th>
<th>Area (km²)</th>
<th>Number of voters</th>
<th>Number of councillors</th>
<th>Number of voters per councillor</th>
<th>Population (2006 Census)</th>
<th>Electoral structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Wimmera</td>
<td>9,308</td>
<td>4,042</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>808</td>
<td>4,475</td>
<td>Unsubdivided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queenscliff*</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4,245</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>3,018</td>
<td>Unsubdivided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindmarsh</td>
<td>7,521</td>
<td>5,088</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>848</td>
<td>6,039</td>
<td>3 two-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towong</td>
<td>6,661</td>
<td>5,404</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1,081</td>
<td>6,019</td>
<td>Unsubdivided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buloke†</td>
<td>7,998</td>
<td>6,056</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>865</td>
<td>6,853</td>
<td>2 two-councillor wards 1 three-councillor ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarrambat</td>
<td>7,324</td>
<td>6,563</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>938</td>
<td>7,520</td>
<td>2 two-councillor wards 1 three-councillor ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyrenees</td>
<td>3,433</td>
<td>7,140</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1,428</td>
<td>6,558</td>
<td>Single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loddon</td>
<td>6,695</td>
<td>7,867</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,573</td>
<td>7,836</td>
<td>3 single-councillor wards 1 two-councillor ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stathambeagle</td>
<td>3,302</td>
<td>8,947</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,278</td>
<td>9,295</td>
<td>5 single-councillor wards 1 two-councillor ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gannawarra†</td>
<td>3,735</td>
<td>9,112</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,302</td>
<td>11,296</td>
<td>2 two-councillor wards 3 single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mansfield†</td>
<td>3,841</td>
<td>9,562</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1,912</td>
<td>7,191</td>
<td>2 two-councillor wards 3 single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Gippsland†</td>
<td>5,728</td>
<td>10,594</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,513</td>
<td>11,912</td>
<td>2 single-councillor wards 1 two-councillor ward 3 single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Gippsland</td>
<td>1,533</td>
<td>11,094</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,585</td>
<td>12,323</td>
<td>3 single-councillor wards 1 four-councillor ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpine†</td>
<td>4,790</td>
<td>11,243</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2,606</td>
<td>12,001</td>
<td>Unsubdivided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigo</td>
<td>2,042</td>
<td>12,017</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,771</td>
<td>14,798</td>
<td>Unsubdivided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moyne†</td>
<td>5,479</td>
<td>12,475</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2,702</td>
<td>15,453</td>
<td>Unsubdivided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Gippsland</td>
<td>6,653</td>
<td>13,317</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,902</td>
<td>16,638</td>
<td>Unsubdivided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corangamite</td>
<td>4,403</td>
<td>13,781</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,969</td>
<td>16,616</td>
<td>4 single-councillor wards 1 three-councillor ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murrindindi</td>
<td>3,880</td>
<td>13,788</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,970</td>
<td>13,672</td>
<td>Single-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepburn†</td>
<td>1,474</td>
<td>13,826</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,975</td>
<td>13,732</td>
<td>3 single-councillor wards 2 two-councillor wards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden Plains†</td>
<td>2,702</td>
<td>14,387</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2,055</td>
<td>16,450</td>
<td>Unsubdivided</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Preliminary submissions

Lyle Allan  
Roz Blades  
Wendy Caculovic  
Janet Cox  
Dandenong Residents and Ratepayers Association  
Geraldine Gonsalvez  
Greater Dandenong City Council  
Andrew Gunter  
Avtar Kaur  
Lynette Keleher  
Matthew Kirwan  
Proportional Representation Society of Australia (Victoria-Tasmania) Inc  
Stefan Redpath  
Jim Reiher

### Response submissions

Lyle Allan  
Roz Blades  
Peter Brown  
Janet Cox  
Maurie & Doreen Fabrikant  
Alan Gordon  
Greater Dandenong City Council  
Andrew Gunter  
Avtar Kaur  
Lynette Keleher  
Matthew Kirwan  
Kylie Knox  
Mary Madigan  
Erica Moulang  
Proportional Representation Society of Australia (Victoria-Tasmania) Inc  
Jim Reiher  
Brian & Maria Sampey  
D Simpson  
Georgia Taylor
Greater Dandenong City Council

Map of Recommended Option
Eleven Councillors, Four Wards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Councillors</th>
<th>Voters</th>
<th>Deviation</th>
<th>Area (sq km)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lightwood</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25,826</td>
<td>+0.77%</td>
<td>17.224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paperbark</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>26,482</td>
<td>+3.32%</td>
<td>13.417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Gum</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23,412</td>
<td>-8.65%</td>
<td>88.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silverleaf</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18,250</td>
<td>+6.81%</td>
<td>10.773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals for all Electorates</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>93,970</td>
<td>-8.65% to +6.81%</td>
<td>129.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average per Councillor</td>
<td></td>
<td>8,543</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>